Theological Magazine

OF THE

EVANGELICAL SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA

Volume 62 September, 1934 Number 5

Motto: 1. Cor. 3, 22-23.
Πάντα ὑμῶν ἐστίν, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ.

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Published bi-monthly and entered at the post office at Saint Louis, Missouri, as second-class matter in December, 1898.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October, 1917, authorized on July 3, 1918.

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Published by the Evangelical Synod of North America. Price per copy (six numbers) $2.00; to foreign countries, $2.20. Rev. H. Kamphausen, Dr. theol. (Giessen Univ.), 1956 W. Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio, Editor.

All communications relating to editorial work, all contributions and exchanges must be addressed to the editor.

All communications relating to business matters must be addressed to Eden Publishing House, 1712-24 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Missouri.

THE RISE OF THE SOCIAL VIEW-POINT IN THE EVANGELICAL SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA

By Dr. J. H. Horstmann

The organic union consummated at Cleveland June 26-27, 1934, marks the close of a definite period in the history of the Evangelical Synod of North America, a mile-stone, as it were, on its march toward the larger goal envisioned by the pioneers of nearly a century ago. From this vantage point of real achievement it would be helpful to stop awhile and look backward at all the other achievements the years have brought and to consider them singly and collectively in the light of the background furnished by the past and of the contribution which these achievements will enable us to make to the larger tasks of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

It would be most interesting if we could at this point check up the record of those more than ninety years with the expectations those six earnest men had in mind when, on Oct. 15, 1840, they got together to set up the simple, modest organization which in the course of time became the Evangelical Synod of North America. They were missionaries to their countrymen in a new world, and as such they naturally expected to do a great deal of what we call home mission work. They were also quite familiar with the missionary work in foreign lands carried on by the institutions in Germany which had sent them here, and we may be quite sure that they not only remembered this work also and sought to interest in it those to whom they ministered. but also induced them to support it in every way possible. We also know that they were deeply interested in the Christian education of the children and young people under their care, and also in the training of teachers and preachers

for the churches that were being founded. And in their dreams of the future, which some of them must have had, they probably saw all these activities developed to greater efficiency as the years went by; some even lived to see, in a modest way, some of the visions realized.

The writer likes to believe, however, that what loomed largest in the back of their minds on that historic day was the ideal of Christian unity, the secret ambition to do something to prevent the growing up, among the German churches in this country of the strife and dissension concerning creeds and theological definitions which had caused such unhappy religious conditions in the land from which they had come. And so, by way of laying down the specifications for a structure that would be large enough, as they believed, to accommodate both the followers of Luther and Melanchthon and those of Zwingli and Calvin, they formulated the historic doctrinal statement which, after serving the Evangelical Synod well for four and ninety years has now become part of the foundation for the Evangelical and Reformed Church. And if the founders of the Synod were doomed to bitter disappointment, in so far as it has not been possible to induce Lutherans to accept an iota of the Heidelberg Catechism, not even in so far as it agrees with Luther's catechism and the Augsburg Confession—they would surely rejoice that the Reformed Church in the United States did, without discussion and unanimously, accept Luther's catechism and the Augsburg Confession, with the understanding that the points of difference between these and the Heidelberg catechism are to be interpreted strictly according to the passages of Holy Scripture bearing on the subject, and in the liberty of conscience which prevails in the Evangelical church.

* * *

What would perhaps be most unintelligible to the founders of what was the Evangelical Synod as we imagine them surveying the record of those 94 years is what may be found on pages 228-30 and 234-37, of the Minutes of the 26th General Conference, held Oct. 3-10, 1933, at Cincinnati, Ohio. And whereas there is reason to believe that many still in the flesh have just as little understanding of the significance of what is there set down, it may be of historical and practical interest to sketch briefly the genesis of that measure of interest in social wrongs and social problems which became manifest among Evangelical pastors and people during the first third of the twentieth century. In the nature of the case the writer can deal with this material only in so far as he himself was more or less directly concerned with what was going on; the valuable and far-reaching contributions which have been made by the Department of Sociology at Elmhurst College, and the Department of So-

cial Ethics at Eden Theological Seminary constitute a separate and important field, the survey of which must be left to more competent hands.

When we speak of the "rise of the social view-point in the Evangelical Synod" the implication is that there was a time when such a view-point was not in evidence, That period comprised, roughly speaking, the first 50-60 years of the Synod's existence, the era of the undisputed sway of the German language in Evangelical churches, which effectively isolated leadership and membership from any real understanding of what was happening in American economic and political life. The further fact that the vast majority of church membership came to the new world with little if anything in the way of finances,—depending upon the remarkable opportunity of earning a competence and winning one's way to wealth which America offered in the two decades that preceded and followed the Civil war,—automatically shut the great majority of these immigrants out from the far more important opportunity of getting an education and thus helped widen the gulf that separated them from the rest of the population.

This isolation was further increased by the fact that the view-point, religious as well as educational and social, of Evangelical leaders at that time was largely determined by that prevailing in the Evangelical state churches of Germany, particularly that of the Prussian state church. The influence of Adolf Stoecker made itself felt among the pastors to some extent during the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century, but the spirit of his labors in the interest of what he called "Christian Socialism"—which must by no means be confused with the far more radical aims of Socialists in England and America—did not fit in with the conditions prevailing in this country, and amounted to little more than a rather ambitious program of paternalistic social welfare in which state and church were supposed to work together. The inherent limitations of this movement are evident from the fact that Stoecker himself, e.g., failed to recognize the inconsistency of his energetic anti-Semitic policy with a truly Christian social view-point.

There had always been, up to the beginning of the world war, some more or less definite and direct contact between the Synod's thought and life and church life and work in Germany, which was not without its influence in various ways. For instance, the statement defining the objectives of the Caroline Mission in St. Louis, written just twenty years ago, was patterned closely after those of Stoecker's city mission work in Berlin. As it illustrates the social view-point of those who drafted it, some of them being among the official leaders of the denomination, it is not without historical value. The statement reads as follows:

"The object of the city mission of the Evangelical churches in St. Louis shall be, in general, the promotion of systematic evangelization, the practice of Christian charity and the assisting and encouraging of reform and uplift movements for the special benefit of the children, the aged and the adult among the poor, the sick, strangers, the unemployed, the religiously indifferent, the neglected, the fallen and the prisoners."

It should be added, however, in fairness to those who framed the above statement, that it soon came to be understood that the *prevention* of poverty, delinquency and crime, the encouragement of thrift, healthful living and wholesome Christian home and family life would have to go along with any effort to relieve want and distress, and that helping people to *keep out* of trouble was much to be preferred to helping them *get* out.

Alongside the influence thus referred to, however, others purely American were destined soon to make themselves felt in a decisive manner. The two men who were perhaps most responsible for the rise of a truly social view-point in the Evangelical Synod were Josiah Strong and Walter Rauschenbusch. Where the work of Prof. Rauschenbusch was chiefly academic and theological, that of Dr. Strong was decidedly popular and practical, and carried a stronger appeal to the general church constituency.

Dr. Strong (1847-1916) was perhaps the first American preacher and writer to apply the principles of the Christian Gospel to civic and economic life and to social wrongs and problems. After serving churches in Wyoming and Ohio, and some experience as secretary of Ohio Home Missionary Society (Congregational), he became pastor of Vine St. Congregational Church, Cincinnati, where he published his first important book "Our Country" (1885), which the chief librarian of Congress called "one of the best books in the world." For Christian work from the social view-point its influence may be compared to that of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for the abolition of slavery. Dr. Strong contended that the physical, earthly welfare of mankind was a fundamental principle of Jesus Christ, and that the neglect of this principle by a church intent only on the salvation of individual souls had alienated the masses of working people who were suffering from social wrongs. Only the whole Christian Gospel of *social as well as individual salvation,* he held, could regain their respect and confidence. With the second edition, which appeared in 1891, this book had a circulation of more than 175,000 in the United States and Canada, a remarkable record for those days, and was translated into many foreign languages. "The Challenge of the City," which appeared in 1907, also had a wide circulation.

The American Institute of Social Service, which Dr. Strong founded in 1902, sought to gather from all possible sources facts

of every kind which bear on social and industrial betterment, to interpret these facts by ascertaining their causes and effects, thus gaining their real significance, and to disseminate the resulting knowledge for the education of public opinion, for the purpose of securing social reform.

Dr. Strong believed that the Kingdom of God represented the social ideal of Jesus' message to mankind. To him it was a vision of civilization perfected; just so far and fast as God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven, so far and so fast will the Kingdom of God come. He held that Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom lays down the fundamental laws and principles by the application of which alone the great social problems can be solved. In other words, he believed that the Kingdom of God, as Jesus taught it, affords the aim, the method, the power and the necessary confidence for the transformation of the world.

At his death *The Survey,* leading journal of social work, said of him: "At the beginning of his preaching of the social gospel, in print, the first and great commandment so overshadowed the second that man's duty toward his neighbor was cramped within narrow bounds of sect and parish. Before it closed, his books had reached tens of thousands of readers, reprinted chapters had gone out almost uncounted, and his monthly *Gospel of the Kingdom* had provided the necessary framework for the discussion of social relations by Sunday school classes that, all told, must have numbered into the millions."

The "Social Ideals of the Churches" formulated by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in 1908, and the program of social reform sponsored some years later by the Men and Religion Forward Movement, were to a very large extent inspired by the work of Dr. Strong and his followers.

On the basis of a paper read at the General Conference in Louisville, Ky., in 1913, "The Kingdom of God and its Business in the Twentieth Century" (See Evangelical Year Book, 1914) the Social Ideals of the Churches were adopted by the General Conference, and a Commission on the Common Welfare was appointed, consisting of Rev. John G. Stilli, chairman, Rev. John Goebel, secretary, and Rev. F. Weber, treasurer; also Messrs. W. C. Ruhnow, and Fred Kressmann, with Revs. A. E. Meyer representing the Board for Home Missions; F. Holke, chairman of the Central Board for Institutions of Charity, and F. P. Jens, chairman of the Conference of Deaconess Hospitals. It was to be the dutly of this Commission to apply the principles of the Gospel of the Kingdom to all questions of the day which affect the moral or economic life of the people, and to disseminate information in regard to them at

the annual district conferences and in the denominational periodicals.

In its first report to the districts, in the following year, this Commission submitted a declaration of principles to the effect that, since the Kingdom of God represented the chief content of the religion of Jesus Christ, the church, and therefore the Synod also, must find their chief task in the advancement and promotion of this Kingdom. While the Kingdom is essentially spiritual and eternal, any conception of it that does not include Christian social ideals is incomplete and inadequate. The churches, and with them the Evangelical Synod, are thus in duty bound to oppose anything in the social order that is not in harmony with the will of Good, and must, on the other hand, make every effort to establish a truly Christian social order.

Granting, the declaration continued, that the churches have always sought to relieve physical distress and material want, as evidenced by the countless orphanages, homes for the aged, hospitals and rescue agencies, and the ministry of deaconesses, and granting that the preaching of the Gospel has ever been a social influence of the first rank, it is nevertheless a fact that the widespread misery, unemployment and unrest, the struggle between capital and labor, the estrangement of the masses from the church, in short, the universal cry for justice and righteousness, is a call to the churches for a more thoroughgoing analysis of social conditions and for adequate measures of prevention rather than mere relief. Under such circumstances all members of the Synod, pastors as well as laymen, need to be made familiar with the existing social crisis and the task of the church in that direction.

By way of practical suggestions the Commission recommended the use of Dr. Strong's *Gospel of the Kingdom,* a monthly publication for young people's and adult Bible classes and other study groups in the churches. It was also recommended that the districts appoint committees on social welfare which could cooperate with the synodical Commission.

At the General Conference in 1917 the Commission reported that on Jan. 19, of that year Prof. Rauschenbusch had lectured before the students of Eden Seminary, St. John's Sunday school, Louisville (Rev. John G. Stilli, pastor) paying the expenses. A standing column entitled "From the Social Viewpoint" had been arranged for in the *Evangelical Teacher* (now the *Light Bearer)* and articles on the child labor problem were to be contributed to the Evangelical Herald.

The resolutions adopted in connection with this report registered the approval of the Conference for what the Commission had accomplished; changed its name into "Commission for Social

Work"; authorized it to arrange each year for four lectures on social problems at Eden Seminary; instructed district presidents to appoint similar commissions in their districts, and authorized the Commission to publish a leaflet in which the most important literature on social problems was to be discussed, with special reference to German publications, for the guidance of pastors and other interested persons. In response to the Commission's suggestion that a separate agency be appointed to deal with the liquor problem, it was stated that the abuse of intoxicating drink could only be abolished through personal efforts in the spirit of the Gospel, as was the policy of "Das Blaue Kreuz" in Germany.

Of the 17 districts of the Synod only four (Atlantic, New York, Ohio and South Illinois) had appointed committees on social service Commission. Of these, however, only that of the New York District actually functioned and set itself a definite task. And when after the War the synodical Commission became inactive —apparently because of the special problems growing out of the War (the activities of the War Welfare Commission, and later the Interchurch World Movement and the Synod's own Forward Movement) plus certain developments in St. John's Church, Louisville, of which the chairman of the Commission had been the pastor,—the New York Committee was ready with a detailed constructive program. In 1919 an attempt was made to recognize the synodical Commission, but all that is recorded is that the program of the New York District committee appears as that of the synodical Commission.

While the General Conference of 1921 had no report from its Commission on Social Service, it did nevertheless endorse legislation looking toward a uniform marriage and divorce law, and also passed a resolution authorizing the President to appoint "an efficient Commission for Social Service, whose task it shall be to study the social questions of the day as they affect the church at large, and to guide the mind of the church in the solution of such questions." In addition it requested its members to give careful consideration to the following preamble and declaration:

a) That the principles of the Gospel of Christ can and must be applied to the wider relationships of life, in order that the spirit of Christ may live in human society as well as in individual souls.

b) That it is the duty of the Christian church to challenge the world with these principles, and work to make the spirit of Christ the dominant influence in human relationships.

c) That the church must be the conscience of society in the social problems of our days.

d) That such a duty involves specific guidance upon specific problems.

THEREFORE WE DECLARE

a) That the right to organize, adequate leisure secured by one day's rest in seven, reduction of hours of labor, and a minimum wage

guaranteeing not only the physical necessities but opportunities of self-development, are fundamental to the development of the spiritual life of the workers;

b) That the principles of Jesus are those of essential democracy and must be basic not only in our political, but also in our industrial life, and that collective bargaining and the sharing of shop-control and management are inevitable steps in its attainment;

c) That a new emphasis on the principles of Christian stewardship, in the acquisition and use of property involving a more equitable distribution of the products of industry, is necessary.

d) That the Gospel necessarily pledges the Church to champion personal against property values in the natural struggle between the two in our day, and that we therefore stand: A. for the abolition of child labor; B. for the regulation of conditions of toil for women; C. for conservation of health; D. for protection of workers from dangerous machinery and occupational diseases; E. for suitable provision for old age of workers.

In the meantime the Missouri District had appointed (1920) a committee on Christian Social Work which, at the conference of 1922 presented as its report a declaration of principles which re-emphasized the idea of the Kingdom of God, as the realization of the will of God in the hearts and lives of men and in all their affairs and relationships, as the solution of social problems and the remedy for the social wrongs of the day. This declaration was embodied in the minutes and afterward reprinted for general distribution. The favorable comment of Dr. Tippy, of the Federal Council Commission on the Church and Social Service, upon this leaflet induced the officers of the Synod to appoint the Commission authorized by the General Conference of 1921. The following persons were appointed: Revs. H. S. von Rague; Reinhold Niebuhr, Phillip Vollmer; Mrs. J. L. Haack; Mrs. Mae A. Friday; Miss Viola Vogel, Messrs. M. O. Riehl; Emil H. J. Rintelmann, and the writer.

This Commission has been functioning since September, 1923, in accordance with the following fourfold aim, which was approved by the General Conference of 1925, and reaffirmed by those of 1929 and 1933.

1. To gather complete, accurate and unprejudiced information concerning economic conditions in this country and in other lands, and concerning all events or movements which involve moral principles or have a bearing upon the welfare of the people.
2. To study this information in the light of the spirit and the letter of the teachings of Christ and with a view to discovering what needs to be done to relieve and remove social wrongs and to Christianize the present social order.
3. To keep in touch with the respective commissions of the Federal Council and similar groups in other denominations, as well as with any other Christian agencies aiming at improving or promoting the welfare of the people.
4. To keep the people in our churches informed concerning the above and kindred subjects through timely, popular articles and discussions in our periodicals and otherwise.

The Commission gave much study to the proble mof outlawing war, and its meeting in 1924 worked out the following "Declaration

on War," which was adopted by the General Conference of 1925, and reaffirmed by that of 1929 and 1933.

"We declare our conviction that international warfare and the Gospel of love and Brotherhood which we profess are incompatible. The methods used and the passions aroused by war both outrage Christ's conception of a Kingdom of God in which men shall trust, love and forgive one another. We therefore pledge ourselves to support every movement which looks toward an organization of the nations for the elimination and outlawry of war; and to use every means to create the spirit of international good will among our people. We furthermore declare that we will not, as a Christian Church ever again bless or sanction war. We make this declaration of abstention as a Christian communion and do not intend it to bind individuals unless and until they accept it personally. We do mean it to commit our Church to the fundamental proposition that to support war is to deny the Gospel we profess to believe."

This resolution seeks to distinguish between the church as a corporate body and its individual members, and commits the one unequivocally on the war question, without such commitment for the individual. We submit this resolution because we are convinced that the church of Christ must disavow war and we feel that it would be both unwise and futile to force individuals to this position before their conscience permits them to accept it voluntarily.

At the suggestion of the Commission the "Social Ideals of the Churches" recommended by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America were adopted by the Gospel Conference of 1925 and offered to the churches as a working basis for study and meditation, group discussion and educational campaigns.

In 1926 there was published a booklet entitled "The Will of God:—Can It, Shall It Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven?", which found a large sale, especially through the Women's organizations. Dr. Vollmer was made executive secretary and spent a large part of his time in doing field work.

During 1927 the Commission conducted a study of denominational publishing houses in St. Louis (Concordia—Missouri Synod; Christian Board of Publication—Disciples, and Eden Publishing House), which the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council described as "uniquely interesting."

A schedule or inquiry was sent to each of the three publishing houses dealing with labor policy, working hours and wage scales. An unpublished account of the study states that it was undertaken "primarily for the purpose of discovering, if possible, the essentials for a genuinely Christian relationship between employers and working men. The Commission is well aware that the business of a denominational publishing house, because it is not conducted for profit, in the ordinary sense of that word, differs considerably from other industrial enterprises, in which production for profit is the chief aim. Nevertheless, for all practical purposes the denominational publishing house is a fairly good illustration of the existing

attitude toward labor among church people with the added emphasis of the direct responsibility which the church has in this field."

In connection with the findings the Commission has formulated the following principles as properly governing the status of labor and relations between employers and employes:

"Human need, human rights, and human welfare transcend property rights and profits on investments. While industry must produce some profit in order to be self-sustaining, the spirit of Jesus Christ in industry demands that production for use rather than for profit be the controlling aim.

"Since labor is the product of a human personality fashioned in the image of the Creator, it is invested with a dignity and value which entitles it to the highest respect. To regard labor as a commodity, to be bought and sold merely according to the law of supply and demand, is incompatible with Christian principles and with human rights and human welfare. The right to useful employment is an inevitable corollary of the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

"The first charge upon industry should therefore be a wage sufficient to support such a standard of living as will enable the worker to be at his best physically, mentally, and spiritually. Such a wage should be the minimum wage in each industry and, as a general principle, women are entitled to equal pay for equal work.

"A fair method of determining wages should, we believe, take into consideration the physical and mental ability of the worker, his loyalty toward the business, his intelligent understanding of its aim, the particular need of the individual and his attitude toward his work, in the order mentioned." Then follows a summary of the "Social Ideals of the Churches."

The findings, which are recorded in such a way as not to disclose the origin of the three sets of replies, show a surprisingly wide range in policy and in wage scales considering the small number of establishments.

In the summer of 1932 there was published "If Thou Hadst Known," an educational pamphlet prepared with the very valuable assistance of the executive secretaries of the Board of Religious Education, the Evangelical Brotherhood and Women's Union and the Evangelical League. This pamphlet has had a wide distribution the past three years.

The General Conference at Cincinnati recognized the task and the work of the Commission on Christianity and Social problems as a regular denominational activity and reorganized it so that its official membership represented the Board of Religious Education, the Department of Sociology, Elmhurst College and the Depart-

ment of Social Ethics, Eden Theological Seminary, besides one pastor to be elected by the General Conference (or the Board of Directors). The executive secretaries of the Evangelical Brotherhood, Evangelical Women's Union and the Evangelical League, as well as the editors of the *Evangelical Herald* and *Der Friedensbote* were made advisory members. These members together were authorized to choose as corresponding members not more than seven men (or women) who have demonstrated a real interest and constructive ability in social work or the study of social problems.

The General Conference also declared its definite and firm opposition to all forms of compulsory military training in high school, colleges and universities; as well as the Citizens' Military and Reserve Officers' Training Camps. It also petitioned the government of United States to grant to members of the Evangelical Synod of North America who may be conscientious objectors to war, the same exemption from military service as has long been granted to members of the Society of Friends and other similar religious organizations. All educational institutions which require military training were also requested to excuse from such training any student belonging to the Evangelical Synod of North America who has conscientious scruples against it.

The social view-point has also had its influence upon the editorial policy of the Synod's church papers. As early as 1925 the General Conference approved, as a part of the directive rules and principles for the editors of these papers the following declaration:

"In discussing problems and events of the day from the Christian point of view the official church papers maintain the Evangelical idea of the Kingdom of God (the rule of God on earth) and stand for truth, justice, and righteousness, even when such a policy might prove unpopular." (See Minutes, P. 271).

The lines along which this aspect of the editorial policy is to be further developed were indicated by the adoption; on the part of the General Conference of 1933, of the "Social Ideals of the Churches," as formulated in 1908 and revised in December, 1932, by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Mimeographed copies of the "Social Ideals" may be had upon request from Evangelical League Headquarters, 1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo., at three cents each to pay for postage and material.)

Since Article 8 of the constitution and By-laws (page 41, Section 169, 3) provides that the editorial policy (of the church papers) shall be determined by the General Council, this body at its last meeting, Feb. 8, 1934, adopted the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, Article 8 of the Constitution and By-laws, p. 41, Section 169, 3, provides that the editorial policy . . . shall be determined by the General Council, and

WHEREAS, Section 165, p. 41, of the same Article states that the publishing interests of the denomination are to be developed and pro-

moted for the primary purpose of stimulating Kingdom interests, so that financial profit is not to be the primary purpose of the denominational publications, and

WHEREAS, the General Conference of 1925 has definitely approved certain guiding principles for an editorial policy (Minutes, 1925, p. 271), and

WHEREAS, the General Conference of 1933 has definitely approved the "Social Ideals of the Churches" formulated by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Council takes cognizance of the above and authorized the editors of our denominational periodicals to follow the principles thus laid down until such a time as it may become necessary to modify or develop this editorial policy.

We have dwelt at some length on the activities of the Commission of Christianity and Social Problems because these seemed to reflect something of the measure of the social view-point represented in the General Conference, which authorized the Commission and approved its work, and which may well be considered as a fairly accurate cross section of the churches.

It is quite clear of course, that passing resolutions and officially approving certain actions is one thing, while it is quite another to put these resolutions into effect by actually applying to the conditions and problems of every-day life the principles that have been and formally approved at official gatherings. However, much more than just a social view-point is required wherever the sincere and determined application of the Christian Gospel to the social wrongs and problems of the day is undertaken. Such an effort presupposes a social consciousness, that is, such an attitude of mind and heart which reacts almost instinctively against the presence of conditions, customs and influences that do not place human welfare, human rights, human happiness and health and life above personal or individual advantage or privilege, and which immediately seeks ways and means to remedy such conditions and establish justice and righteousness in their place.

Just how far our churches and their membership, as well as their local and national leaders still are from such a state of mind, each one may judge for himself. To the writer it seems quite clear that before this point can be reached the rank and file of our constituency—and not a few in positions of leadership—need to be convinced that social ideals, aims and programs as well as the pronouncements of the General Conference based upon them are not just somebody's "fool notion" or an effort to keep up with "liberal" opinion, but are deeply rooted in the Old and New Testament scriptures. It is not enough to endorse or adopt the Social Ideals of the Churches; if the social view-point is to develop into a social consciousness the moral meaning of the Social Ideals of the Churches must "get under the skin" of pastors and people, of men, women

and young people in the churches, so that *something begins to happen.* As long as the rank and file of our people and their leaders are quite content with the *status quo, except in so far as they themselves happen to suffer from it,* the social view-point of the Christian Gospel has not yet begun to leaven the whole lump.

GENESIS AND CARDINAL DOCTRINES OF THE BARTHIAN SCHOOL

By Rev. Askan Stueler, D.D.

The limitation imposed upon us by lack of available space makes it necessary for us, in discussing the Barthian Theology, to be content with a modest introduction, giving first, very briefly, the genesis and then outlining the cardinal points of this revolutionizing teaching. That it is indeed revolutionary we can say from personal knowledge of its effects. During our visit—3 years ago—in Germany where liberalism and ultra-liberalism had held sway so long, we noticed that a decided change had taken place: the authority of the Word of God had been restored, and a refreshing Evangelicalism or Biblicism was prevailing there. To the question as to the cause of that change the answer was: Karl Barth! His importance has been recognized by all professional theologians, on the left as well as on the right, by opponents and adherents. In practically all the foremost theological periodicals of Europe Barth's theology is frequently and constantly mentioned, criticized, approved, rejected, discussed or referred to. Many see in him a second Luther. Count Keyserling has declared him to be the savior of Protestantism in Germany. This may very soon become true in a still more decisive sense as it is to Karl Barth and his theological school that the really Christian members of the Church are looking to lead them in their struggle against the imposition of paganism by the so-called "German Christians" and others.

I.

The 19th century regarded man as the central fact in the universe and was characterized by the ambition to subject all things to human control—which was supposed to be possible—and by an idealistic optimism (despite Schopenhauer!) resulting in naturalism, philosophic idealism and pragmatism. As philosophy, religion and theology were subject-centered, man-centered, the development finally ended in humanism. This anthropocentric and anthropocratic spirit is still alive, especially in America; but the War with its consequent destruction of old institutions, the quaking of seemingly solid foundations, and subsequent general disillusionment has tended to make thinking more realistic, and the foremost example of true realism is the theology of Barth and his school. With this realism the student of Karl Barth's works is confronted at once by the language and argumentation which he employs, and which is highly scientific, dialectical, paradoxical, complicated and at first hard to understand, just as real life itself is difficult to compre-

hend. One must "break his head and crack his skull before coming to a certain degree of clarity." Barth himself says with regard to this: "Difficult and complicated is life in every respect. Simple is neither today's condition of theology, nor the condition of the world, nor the condition of man over against God. He who in this condition is concerned about the truth must have the courage first to be not plain, not simple. All short-breathed pseudo-simplicities are the surest evidence that they pass by the life and the crisis in which all life is to be found. Just exactly in the confusing, kaleidoscopic motion and tension of its lines, and not otherwise, does thinking do justice to life." In order to really follow K. B. in these intricate, complicated paths one must, according to Max Strauch, be thoroughly familiar with Plato and Kant, with Franz Overbeck, Christoph Blumhardt, Soeren Kierkegaard and Feodor Dostojewski. "For these are the closing links of an imposing gallery of ancestors to whom B. often likes to refer, and whose line leads back over Luther and Calvin to Paul and Jeremiah. It is significant that this spiritual genealogical line does not touch Schleiermacher, despite the genius of his life-work."

As a university student B. confesses to have been influenced mainly by Ritschl, Adolph von Harnack and Wilhelm Herrmann. This is noteworthy in view of the fact that his development theologically removed him farther and farther away from his old teachers, while his intimate personal friendship with them, though they became his open opponents, never ceased nor grew cold. After for a time having assisted Martin Rade in editing "Die Christliche Welt" B. was called to a pastorate in Geneva and later in Safenwil. Beside his work as a preacher he furnished valuable contributions to theological magazines and delivered many addresses which earned him great recognition. A number of these addresses together with later ones, have been published under the title "Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie," translated into English by Douglas Horton, a translation that has found B.'s full approval, including the change of the title into: "The Word of God and the Word of Man." In this approval lies an evidence of the conviction which B. in his gradual development from left to right has unmistakably gained, namely, that the modernist, liberal, individualistic, historic-relativistic, subjectivistic, religio-historic, philosophical theology of Neo-Protestantism is the word of man in contrast to the Word of God revealed (or rather witnessed to) in the Bible.

In 1919 B. found himself one day quite unexpectedly famous as a result of his commentary upon Paul's Epistle to the Romans. He had written this voluminous work to clarify his own mind, and his amazement over the reception accorded it he expresses in these words: "As I look back on the way I have come, I seem to myself

as one who was groping up the dark stairs of a church-tower, and who grips hold of what he thought was a guiding-rope, but which turned out to be a bell-pull. The clang of the big bell thus unwittingly tolled startled me as much as it surprised those who heard its din." In all theological camps it was at once recognized that here something entirely new, a new theological school had appeared which, without ado, was called the Barthian School. This was absolutely against the intention of the very modest author of the new Romans-Commentary. His whole contribution to the theological discussion B. asked to consider rather as a marginal note, as a modest question mark and yet a decided exclamation point, as a corrective of all existing theologies, as a new illumination in which they are all set when contemplated from his point of view. But, he says, if he was accused of being the father of a child, he should have the right to name it himself, and he chose the name: "Theology of Correction," or "Theology of Crisis." Sometimes it is called "Theology of the Word" and also "The Dialectical Theology." Whether B. resents it or not, there exists today the Barthian School, and also the name "Barthian Theology" seems to stick. Gogarten, Thurneysen, Brunner and, to a large degree, Bultmann move along the same lines as B., and a great number of other recognized theologians have been drawn into his train, to say nothing of the numerous lesser lights in the theological and philosophical sky.

Though B. since 1921 has been professor of theology, despite his preference of the ministry, one must bear in mind that his theology was born from the crisis of preaching, from the difficult problems of a pastorate. To these problems B.'s theology owes its genesis; it arose simply out of what he felt to be "the need and promise of Christian preaching." Forced back on the minister's problem, the sermon, he found the theology he knew wholly inadequate, and thus he came to the "Leitmotiv" of his dogmatics, that doctrine is to be tested and regulated by preaching: "Church preaching is the starting point and the practical end of dogmatics." This is the same position as held by a late theologian of Great Britain who said: "The worth of a doctrine is, 'Can it be preached?' "

B. saw, upon careful examination, that theology was dominated by a false, very human, man-centered, egoistic philosophy; making much of relative values, but strangely silent about any absolute authority; identifying salvation loosely with religious behaviorism; being obsessed with an excessive devotion to religious psychology; basing faith on subjective religious experience and consciousness; instead of having for its subject-matter the Revelation of God, building towers of Babel and deifying man. And thus a deeply

religious soul co-ordinated to a highly scientific mind, the inherited tradition of the Reformed Churches, the reaction against the early influence of Harnack, Herrmann and modernist-liberal theology under the stress of pastoral work, the ferment of Kierkegaard's ideas,—"all these combined with the social unrest of the period culminated in the Great War to give him his need of a gospel for a time of crisis." Barth has clearly recognized that modern theology, from which he originally started, is unable to meet the crisis in which Civilization, Society, the Church, the Minister, Theology, and each individual is to be found; it cannot save us. By the modernists, especially by the "comparative history of religion" school, Christianity "is placed in the stream of history, subject to the developments of history, the result of which must be complete relativity. In place of being the absolute religion, Christianity becomes merely a historical phenomenon and carries no guarantee that it will not at some later day be surpassed by other religions. The result of this view is that all sense of Christianity as a Revelation has disappeared from the modern historical consciousness. Such a view, as Troeltsch admits, makes Christianity dependent on the civilization in which it takes root and grows up. A blow has been dealt to its decisive quality as an Act of God, an event breaking into time and place and speaking to all times and all places. It has been transformed into a common religious idea and thereby rendered meaningless and powerless. The great task which Jesus has set to man is the building of the Kingdom of God, by which the modernists understand the bringing in of a new social order, a perfect human society here on (this) earth. The goal seems farther off than Jesus apparently expected it to be, but as it is a 'not yet', the modernists are confident that at the last his dream will be fulfilled by human activity alone in gradual evolutionary progress. And although we may not see it, our spiritual growth here will have prepared us for perfect service in the hereafter, a state which, according to this view, is to be thought of as continuous with the life that now is."

Into this "naive and sugary optimism of easy liberalism," into this idealistic-optimistic, self-righteous, egotistical world of philosophical and theological thinking there falls like a lightning flash and thunderbolt from heaven the declaration of Karl Barth that there is *an infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity,* both in its negative and positive meaning; his *distinction* between *religion,* as a universal human activity directed toward the Godhead, and *Christianity,* which is not religion, correctly understood, but *God's Revelation of Himself,* the vertical entrance of the Absolute into time; his restoration of the *Word of God* to the place of *authority* as the *standard of all things;* his emphasis on the *Christ of the Creeds* alongside the so-called historical Jesus; his

insistence on the *Resurrection* as the *Foundation of Faith;* his conception of the *Kingdom of God,* in keeping with the New Testament view, as *eschatological;* his grounding of *Christian Ethics* in the doctrine of the *forgiveness of sins and justification by faith,* through the grace of God, as an *integral part of Christian Dogmatics,* not a mere appendix. In reaction against the subjectivity and more-or-less pantheistic immanence theories of liberalism and humanism the chief interest of the Barthian School lies in proclaiming the *objectivity, absoluteness, personality, righteousness, holiness, 'wholly-other-ness', omnipotence, transcendence and sovereignty of God,* the right attitude before whom is that of holy awe, reverence and humility, and in the *transfer* of the *center* of religion *from the subject to the object.* The essential realism of this theology lies in the distinction of the *Reality of God* from all ideas about Him, from all subjective experience of Him, from all natural theology. Schleiermacher's and his successors' individualistic theology had encouraged each individual Christian to conceive God psychologically, to create in his soul a God of his own imagination, which is practical idolatry. Faith, according to Barth, can never be based upon subjective religious experience. While the latter is the psychologic-emotional form that faith—which precedes and not follows it—will assume, it is subject to the divine judgment on all that is human and merely religious. It is not identical with faith but only a simile ("Glaeubigkeit versus "Glaube"). *Faith* is *not a work of man* at all, but an *act of God.* It is wonder, beginning, creation. Psychologically faith can be spoken of only in a negative way: as *"vacuum"* into which the Eternal enters as content, as *"Hohlraum"* that encloses the Objective-Invisible of God. It is the acceptance of God's actus forensis, the acceptance of the divine "as if" of justification.

Besides his dogmatics, the richest source for an understanding of B.'s theology is his commentary upon the Romans, which among the exegetical literature of today is unique. Its intended lonely position appears indicated in its motto: "He did not go up to Jerusalem, but went away into Arabia." "To contemplate the Biblical picture itself; through the historic-psychological form to let come out the spirit, the super-historical, the beyond-human; to stand alongside Paul, not in the measured distance of a spectator, but as an actual participant; to make the wall between the first and the 20th century transparent; between that past and our present to start the conversation of the contemporaneous": that is B.'s endeavor. He does not believe in verbal inspiration, nor does he reject sound textual criticism and a historic-psychological attitude, but he sees in the mere matter-of-fact and transcendent interest of the Bible also the main interest of theology. Under this methodical view-

point the utterances of the prophets and apostles become through the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum: Witness* of the *Revelation,* the testimony of the *Word of God* itself. And this Word, this Revelation of God Himself is considered to be the sole and decisive answer to all problems of human existence and at the same time appreciated as the last meaning of all philosophy that is worthy of its name. Revelation as an Act of God is climaxed in that singular event and *paradox: Jesus Christ.* B.'s method is an earnest attempt, in the midst of all liberal and positive misinterpretations, "to stay in the boat of Biblical Truth."

As we have seen, the Biblical God is the transcendent God. But that does not prevent Him, according to B., from becoming *immanent* in the heart of the believer *through God the Holy Spirit,* the third Person of the Trinity.—The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which had been either discarded or neglected by modern theology, has been brought to the fore again by B. His argumentation differs somewhat from the old theology but results practically in the same conclusions as the theology of the Reformers. The Holy Spirit is called the Redeemer because it is through Him that we actually receive the gifts of grace which are offered us in Christ.—Yet that immanence of God is radically different from the prevalent ideas of immanence held by the modernists. There can be no fusion or identification of the Holy Spirit with the human soul; God remains personal and the *Lord* even in the heart of the believer. "God is neither force of nature nor force of soul, nor anything of the higher powers of which we know or can possibly know, but the crisis of all powers, their prime mover and final term, grounding them all. God is God as revealed as finally as the infinite can ever be revealed to the finite through the event: Jesus."

Over against the sovereign, almighty, righteous, real God and the coming world there stands man, weak, broken, unrighteous, utterly corrupt, and the world known to him, which will perish. This *radical, cosmic-eschatological dualism* is genuinely Biblical. It is the continual crisis. "Because the influence of philosophy and so-called science upon modern theology leads to an assumption of the inmost nature of man as divine, to a gradual ascent from the less of the divine in man to the more in God, man has almost obliterated the difference between the creature and the Creator, and the deep wound made in human nature by sin is but thinly skinned over by such an optimistic evolutionary teaching." B. and his friends prove it to be wrong both philosophically and theologically. They go back to the Biblical doctrine of the *Fall* and the *loss of the imago dei,* back to the doctrine of *original sin* and *broken humanity.* B. includes in his characterization of man as unrighteous also the so-called moral, religious and pious man. He vividly and

impressively describes the various towers of Babel of moral and religious righteousness which all of us are constantly building, and at which the devil laughs. Our modern self-righteousness is of the same kind as that of the Pharisees which drew the sharp rebuke of Jesus. In this perception lies the chief explanation of B.'s abhorrence of mysticism and pietism.—The essence of sin is rebellion against God, in other words, pride. It is a theft from God which becomes perceptible as that daring stepping across the death-line put before us, as that deifying of man and humanizing of God in the shape of erecting the romantic immediacy—the Not-God, the God of this world. Man's sin affects the cosmos, and against this sin, against these assertions of pride B. sees the everlasting No of God and the doom of destruction for the whole of this world. But he sees also the dawn of Redemption in this crisis: "It is the supreme law of this world, the hint of the Lawgiver, who as such is above His law; it is also the turning-point to the better; it is the limiting-fence and a way out; it is the end and a new start; it is No and Yes; the landmark of Divine wrath and the landmark of approaching Divine deliverance."

As God is God, the separation between Him and man cannot be final. There is indeed *no way from man to God, but a way from God to man.* A meeting has been made possible by the grace of God in *Jesus Christ,* the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the *Eternal Son of God, the God-man, the Incarnation of God, the Word of God, the Reconciler.* It will be seen by this that the accusation of pessimism, which has been hurled against B., is utterly unfounded. The fact is simply this that he and his friends see more clearly than others the utter depravity of man, which evokes the judgment of God, and would call us to repentance, faith and obedience; they would show us the way of salvation. "So long as man remains in his pride and self-asurance he feels no need of a Mediator but when the knowledge of his sinfulness comes home to him in an eternal moment in the crisis of the Word, he is made ready for the Gospel of the God-man." In Christ God's love breaks through His anger which is not an illusion, just as sin is not an illusion. "Jesus Christ is the bridge which God has thrown out to man in his sin and need, over which He comes to us. The grace of God meets us in the place of greatest terror. God does it, God suffers, God takes sin on Himself, for only God by His sacrifice can atone." The incarnation was no gesture but bitter reality, yet such as to conceal Christ's Godhead: the Son of God came "incognito," unrecognizable as God until after the resurrection. Nostra assumit, ut nobis sua conferet. "He made Himself one with sighing, sinful humanity in a complete solidarity culminated in His vicarious death." But *"what took place on Calvary is an event only*

for the believer. It is once and for all, but this is a truth which faith alone can perceive. *The world is not redeemed;* it is not Christian. But there is *a reconciliation waiting for the world.*" One comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior, not through the historical picture of Jesus, but through the witness of the risen Christ as given in the Bible. Occupation with the "Christ after the flesh" alone (the historical Jesus) means disintegration for the Church and disaster for the Christian life.

On the other hand, faith in Christ as the Son of Good, as the risen Lord, will issue in a new birth, a new creaturehood in Christ, true Christian ethics, the Christian's life of love as a servant of God in the home, in the Church, in Society. Holiness in itself is no holiness whatever, says B. There can be no inside to the safe and lauded domain of religion so long as there is no outside. However, the essential truth of the clever paradox that the service of God is, or must become, the service of man is not saying that our precipitate service of man, even when it is undertaken in the name of purest love, becomes by that happy fact the service of God. Such an idea and practice means the secularizing of Christ, which should be hateful to us. We do not wish to betray Him another time. According to B. the Christian life, in its proper sense, is something which we do not live, but a different person altogether. It is the life which God Himself in Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit. "It is true, certainly, that our life is 'hid with Christ in God.' But, as Paul indicates, this is an eschatological conception whose full realization lies in the future. For the present this life is hidden and is fully ours only in promise, until 'Christ Who is our life, shall appear,' " and His Kingdom of justice, righteousness, peace and love, which now is but dimly mirrored and imperfectly reflected in the hearts and lives of believers, is fully, universally, eternally and gloriously established, in "the new heaven and the new earth," by the manifestation of the Lord in power and majesty.

Having reached the limits of the space allotted to us we must stop here, concluding with the words of Douglas Clyde MacIntosh: "As Spengler, the famous author of 'The Decline of the Occident,' is facing toward the setting sun, so Barth is facing east, toward the dawn of a new day," over which, we add, he would place the inscription: "Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Soli Deo Gloria!"

EDUCATION IN RELIGION FOR THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

By Henry G. Kroehler

It is generally agreed that we are at the end of an era. We can discuss in detail here neither the passing era nor the coming one. The passing age has been characterized by a far-reaching individualism. This individualism, working in the field of industry and economics, both national and international, has brought about much suffering and injustice. Now it has run its course. It cannot perpetuate itself any longer. Its ideals and principles have, however, become deeply rooted in our culture and also in our religion. The change, although it might be accomplished without much bloodshed, must nevertheless be nothing short of a revolution. Through this revolution we shall be aiming at some sort of collectivistic society, the ideals and principles of which are as yet not clearly defined or understood.

The task of education in religion for this new social order is twofold: First, we must foster a religion in the souls of people which will function constructively toward an abundant life through this change as well as in the new order. In some instances this means pulling up stakes from some of the old encampments of religion. Because our church has been so intimately related with and dependent on the passing order, it will at times be extremely difficult to reconstruct the work of the church on the basis of the new order. The second part of this task is, however, even more important. We must educate in religion in such a way as to direct the formation of the coming order. The new order will be molded by some force or group of forces. Nor will this formation be a matter of chance. It will be purposeful and intentional on the part of those who are directing it. If we are to judge from the changes which have been accomplished in some of the European countries, we may fairly conclude that if the church does not direct the change, the change will be directed to the detriment of the church.

At a recent conference of pastors it was suggested that religion could not be taught, but only "caught" or transmitted. The idea reflected in this discussion conceives of teaching as the instilling of facts and concepts in the minds of pupils. Education, and also teaching, must be life and vital experience. When thus conceived we can teach religion and do not need to depend upon its being more or less accidentally caught. Only this kind of education in religion will suffice for the changing as well as for the new order.

Failures of the Church's Educational Program

The present education in religion is falling short of meeting the needs which this changing world places before us especially in failing to foster socially creative living. There are many instances in modern life where people manage to live creatively as far as their own individual lives are concerned. In the larger social life with its far more complex problems creative living on the part of Christians has been lamentably lacking. During the last few decades when the cruelties and injustices of our present order have become especially apparent, there has been little distinction between the actions of Christians and of non-Christians. As a Christian Church we have also done very little to indicate that the teachings of our Master have anything to say in condemnation of the inhuman effects of our "rugged individualism." Far from exerting a changing influence upon this suffering-producing civilization, Christians as well as others have become part and parcel of it.

This has been perhaps the most obvious failure of our education in religion. We can, however, refer to several other, and to some extent related, failures. We are well aware of the fact that many educated men and women are not within the church. They are excellent people, too, usually with a high standard of morality and often with considerable spiritual resource and power. By all means we must not judge this situation too lightly. These educated people lead and direct much of modern life. Often they are leaders of our youth. Through positions in secondary schools and colleges they do more to shape the ideals and lives of our boys and girls than the church can possibly do through the present arrangement. The disquieting part of this matter is that the number of those with higher education outside of the church seems to be still on the increase. A related failure in the educational task of the church is seen in those many, many cases where young people still find a mental conflict between science and religion. As if we were living before Columbus discovered America, much of our materials still implies that heaven is a physical locality above us; accepts the stories of the ax floating on water and of the big fish swallowing Jonah as if they were scientific fact; emphasizes the physical part of the virgin birth, miracles and resurrection stories; in short, the Bible is used as if it were a scientific and a scientifically historical text-book. The tragedy of this mistake is increased by giving the impression that these things are religiously significant. All this is a sad commentary, not upon the intellectual capacity, but upon the intellectual effort of many of our religious leaders. We cannot expect this intellectual laziness to meet the approval of the intellectual alertness of our youth.

We might also mention the failure of the church to bring many

of the people living at its very door into its fellowship. More significant is its failure to give a thorough and clear understanding of the Christian religion to those within its fellowship. If you ask a group of adults what the purpose of the church is you will generally receive some vague answers about winning souls to Christ or saving people. In an age when people know many things quite well, a religion cannot mean much to them unless they are also well informed about it. People today know much more about the details of the latest front page murder than they do about the murder of their Master. They spend a great deal of time in reading. They read the newspapers, the magazines of great variety, and the books of which there is no end. But the Bible, the textbook of their religion, if it comes in at all, is read for perhaps two or three minutes a day. Furthermore, the ordinary layman's knowledge about the history of his church or about the great religious days is very limited. That is, the church has failed and is still failing in this part of its work to educate in religion. For this day and especially for the New Day these failures must be turned into successes. Similarly the church has not succeeded in instilling in the hearts and minds of its people a deeply rooted challenge of and loyalty to its cause. Many a young person who is active and even a leader in his church neglects to make any church contact when he moves into a new community. In its educational work the church failed to create in them a great enough devotion to the cause to continue in spite of any change. A devotion which can be so easily shaken will have no chance of surviving the more deeply rooted changes of our modern civilization.

Loyalty to a Christian Social Order

There is far more to be said on the positive side of this subject than on the negative. The most fundamental characteristic of the new education in religion is the thoroughgoing social approach. In spite of the emphasis upon the social gospel the Christian religion has been making largely a personal approach to salvation. The question most frequently asked is: "Are you saved?" When we receive people into the church we ask that they publicly confess Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior. Our teaching in the church has centered upon the individual and his personal life. We have emphasized goodness as far as it applies to the individual.

This emphasis never has been entirely true to Jesus Christ. But for the present day as well as for the coming day with the larger social emphasis, the greater interdependence, and the trend toward collectivism it will never make religion vital. Our trouble today certainly is not that we do not have enough "saved" men and women. The trouble is that these "saved" men and women have

done so very little to save society and those who are despised and neglected—the very people in whom their Savior was most interested. We have believed people when they said that they loved God with all their hearts and minds. We have said that we could not judge their inward attitude. Although we have often spoken of it, we have practically forgotten that our love to God has according to Jesus the very concrete social implication of loving our neighbor. This part of the religious life we can observe. Many of the church's critics have observed our failure in this respect. We in turn have paid very little attention to their criticisms. It has been too comfortable to say that we love God and let it rest there. Here we felt secure from the criticism of others.

Now we must make the social implications of our love toward God the primary thing. In fact henceforth our question should no longer be: "Are you saved?", but: "Are you helping to save the social order?" Our primary concern will have to be about the social effectiveness of a person's religion. We shall find that this is not at all removed from the emphasis of Jesus. His greatest appeal was made on the basis of loyalty to a great cause, the Kingdom of God. In fact in a number of instances he first required an indication of proper love to one's neighbor before he was ready to accept the person's avowal of love to God. While we do not want to forget the rest, we need for today and tomorrow the appeal and challenge of Jesus with its concrete social implications. Nor is it proper to refer to this as another emphasis upon the social gospel. It is rather an application of the Gospel of Jesus to our modern needs.

Some will say that the highest aim of religious education must always be the individual—the enrichment of his religious life. Others will insist that the highest aim must be a Christian social order. From our viewpoint we would not divide these aims. In the religious education for the new social order they must be one. They were one with Jesus. He never seemed to be bothered about the problem of whether it is more important that the Kingdom of God grow within you or be established among men. Both were important; and the former, in the mind of Jesus, could be achieved only through a whole-hearted devotion to the latter. So it is today. We do not want to save individuals so that they might save the social order. Our task is to secure the whole-hearted devotion of people to the cause of building a Christian social order, so that society may be saved and people through their devotion to this cause may also find salvation. In practice we have usually reversed the "best attested" saying of Jesus, to the effect that we can save our souls only by losing ourselves in his cause. A true practice of this

rule of life in our religious education will do much toward promoting a religion for the New Day.

Our present church school materials are entirely too personal in their approach. We must have far more emphasis upon doing good, whereas now our emphasis is upon being good. The social needs of human society must be studied in our church schools as earnestly as we have eer attempted to study the Bible. We must lead our youth to a fearless and thoroughgoing application of the teaching of Jesus to the problems of our day. We have called upon them to give their fullest loyalty to Jesus and to join the church. We must now first ask of them their loyalty to a Christian social order. As they give themselves to this great cause they will find their fellowship with Jesus and their love toward God grow in accordance with their devotion.

Other Implications

This task has other implications for our education in religion. It can never be accomplished through our present organization and program of religious instruction. Efforts to increase the amount of religious training given to children must be re-enforced by a program that will be adequate for this age of greater learning and wider experience. At a recent church school conference a superintendent from one of our larger churches made the plea that these gatherings be devoted to discussion of plans to increase our church school enrollment. As we devote ourselves to the cause of religious training for our new social order we shall spend very little or no energy directly upon increasing enrollments. We shall, however, be concerned about building an effective program. This will require first that the pastor be a religious educator. The pastor at present is primarily an administrator and a performer of routine ministerial acts. The larger the church the less time seems to be left for the pastor to devote to the real task of the church. These pastors will immediately say that it is impossible to find more time to spend on religious education. If that is true, then our churches have wandered a long way on a path which was not originally designated for them. The writer is personally convinced that if the pastors once feel the great urgency of their educational task they will find time for it. They are the only ones professionally trained for this task. We cannot expect satisfactory results if we turn the burden of the task over to willing but untrained workers. If we expect to educate our young people in a religion that will function in a new social order, we must be willing to recognize that this is more important than the conducting of funeral services.

In our greater educational program for the church we should therefore seek to establish a higher standard. The various standards

published by the International Council of Religious Education have been a great help in this direction. The children and young people learn to live up to certain standards of accomplishment in other fields of activity. In connection with their life in the church these standards have usually been entirely omitted, or they have been very vague and almost beyond practical use. To gain the respect and devotion of a generation which expects great things, the church is compelled to set its intellectual as well as spiritual requirements high.

Our Religious Heritage

A characteristic of the modern age especially in America has been an extremely contemporaneous spirit. Interest in history has been and still is very low. Very few people see modern developments in a historical perspective. The church fortunately has escaped this attitude in part. Church people have always more or less felt dependent on a part of the historical heritage, the Bible. But even in this respect, church people feel themselves less related to and dependent on the past than people did a few generations ago. When people are forced to face a crisis, a spirit too contemporaneous and without a foundation built on the past will not help them. We are now facing unusual crises in our personal living as well as in the entire social order. As religious people we need for these crises a spiritual life built upon a historical understanding and re-enforced by the spiritual wealth of our religious heritage. So we need to acquaint our youth with the Bible far better than we have in the immediate past. In so doing we should, however, make full use of the results of research and criticism. We shall be doing only half a job if we teach the Bible merely in order to get the history out of it. Imbedded in its stories and in its writings are eternal moral and spiritual truths. As we help our people to see these through the outward form and pattern in which they are written, we shall be giving them a treasure for the enrichment and strengthening of their starving spirits. Through them they will gain a far better understanding of life and will be encouraged to live more creatively, both personally and socially. But the Bible is only one part of our great religious heritage. The people of the church know still less about the other part—church history and literature. Very few know anything about its almost two thousand years of history. To be effective participants in the building of a new social order upon a Christian basis we must have knowledge of Christian history as a foundation upon which to build. Thus we must help our youth gain an understanding of the growth and development of the Christian church; of its struggles, defeats and victories; of its efforts, teachings and work at various periods of its life.

When we look at the present-day lack of interest in the church and in Christian principles, we can readily see that much of it is due to an understanding which is too superficial and not founded upon the past. The larger use of our historical materials will not only strengthen religious convictions. It will also arouse new interest in many places where interest has subsided. Our program of religious instruction should include then a definite time for the teaching of our religious history. Much of this material can be used as resource material in all of our religious education. But in addition enough time should be devoted to the special task of providing a knowledge and understanding of this past. A good share of this instruction should come before or early in the adolescent age.

One final thought in connection with our education in religion for the new social order needs emphasis. One of the evidences of the lack of religious vitality is that so few religious symbols and concepts most commonly used reveal the atmosphere of modern life. We have carried along largely a group of terms which at one time were the vital expression of current life but now are far removed from it. We speak of the Kingdom of God. Now a kingdom was at one time the common term applied to a group organized under one government. It was an expression taken from the ideals of the time. A change in this expression has been suggested by various people. Never has such a change found wide acceptance. A different term widely used and taken from current life, as for instance Democracy of God, would make our religion seem far more vital to the youth of today. A similar error we make when we refer to God as King. Our highest ideal of one who leads and directs is no longer expressed by that term. Yet we regularly use it in our hymns and otherwise for the expression of the highest good and power. Up to now this has worked unusually well. It is surprising that we have been able to arouse so much interest in religion. But now as we face the New Day we cannot hope to produce good results through its wide use any longer. A few more illustrations must suffice. The theological concept of the Trinity of God belongs to an entirely different life than ours. When we teach it today it becomes a mechanical analysis of the character of God. It is merely a pattern by which certain values in respect to God were expressed. These values we shall lose if we persist in putting them into this old pattern. We can preserve them if we use expressions which grow out of modern life. Because miracles have played a large part in the religious life of the past, we shall always have to deal with the term "miracle." But we must recognize that this term seems out of date and awkward to our youth. They live in a physical world governed by laws which are fairly

well understood. They soon learn that even the life within is law-abiding. In religion we may indeed have many things that we as yet cannot explain according to laws. Yet we know that our religious life is guided by the God of the law-abiding universe. Because the term "miracle" belongs to a pre-scientific age and because of the intellectual temper of our youth, we must seek to establish the foundation facts in respect to the events referred to as miracles in the past and further to discover their religious significance and values. We can only gain by omitting the term in reference to current religious life. If the reader will examine the periods of greatest religious vitality in the past he will find that most of the patterns, symbols and expressions of the religious life were taken from current experiences. Our task in preparing for the new social order requires of us that our religion likewise be expressed in living terms.

It is obvious that thus far religious education has refused to make full use of the results of modern science and higher criticism. Without using these results it will not be able to make the church and religion acceptable to the youth of today nor equip them for a constructive part in the coming age. Still more important, it will lose many religious values by continuing to use the old wine skins. Because the religious education in our church schools has largely failed to make such adjustments in the past, it now faces this task in addition to meeting the peculiar needs of our changing world. In meeting these needs we shall find that the greatest appeal we can make will be in the interest of building a Christian social order. Our youth will find their fullest self-realization as they give themselves whole-heartedly to this great task.

Liturgische Bestrebungen in Deutschland seit dem Weltkrieg.

Von Professor D. Dr. Hermann Werdermann, Dortmund.

Es war eine Ueberraschung im Raum der deutsch-evangelischen Kirche und im Arbeitsgebiet der praktischen Theologie, daß seit dem Ende des Weltkrieges die **liturgischen** Fragen plötzlich in stärkstem Maße das Interesse auf sich zogen, daß sie die Theologen und auch weite Kreise der Gemeindeglieder lebhaft beschäftigten. Zwar war die Liturgik in den praktischen Vorlesungen neben der Homiletik und Katechetik immer behandelt worden. Georg Rietschel hatte in einem zweibändigen „Lehrbuch der Liturgik" (1900 und 1908) um die Jahrhundertwende alle Stoffe zusammengefaßt. Aber bei ihm und bei den meisten Liturgen herrschte ein „historisches" Interesse vor. Dabei war die Lage in den verschiedenen deutsch-evangelischen Kirchen wenig geklärt. Das kam allein schon von der verschiedenen geschichtlichen Entwicklung her. Die mehr reformierten Bezirke hatten ihre eigene Auffassung. Und in dem reformierten Grundansatz lag ja weithin eine Ablehnung besonderer liturgischer Bestrebungen. Daneben standen geschlossene lutherische Gebiete, die ein reiches liturgisches Erbe hatten, die es sich aber fast ausschließlich angelegen sein ließen, zu erhalten, was noch vorhanden war.

Zahlenmäßig herrschte auch liturgisch der unierte Typus vor, der eine mittlere Linie innehielt. Im Zusammenhang mit der Einführung der preußischen Agende von 1892 hatte es gewisse Auseinandersetzungen gegeben. Aber seitdem die Agende eingeführt war, wurde sie benutzt, und sie beherrschte praktisch die Lage. Im Verborgenen blieb von da her eine Spannung bestehen, nämlich wie auf dem liturgischen Gebiet Freiheit und Zwang abzugrenzen seien. Gegenüber dem willkürlichen Standpunkt, daß liturgisch jeder Pastor tun könne, was ihm beliebe, und was er für richtig halte, stand der andre, der die Agenden wie ein kirchlich-liturgisches „Gesetzbuch" ansah und der Meinung war, daß grundsätzlich jeder Pastor der Landeskirche verpflichtet wäre, sich liturgisch nur an die eingeführte Agende zu halten und Aenderungen nur in dem von ihr erlaubten Rahmen vornehmen dürfte. Luther selbst hatte einen sehr weitherzigen Standpunkt in seiner deutschen Messe von 1526 vertreten. In der Vorrede (W. A. 19, 73) sagt er: „Ich will nicht begehren, daß diejenigen, so bereits ihre gute Ordnung haben oder es durch Gottes Gnade besser machen können, dieselbige fahren lassen und uns weichen. Denn es ist nicht meine Meinung, daß das ganze deutsche Land eben müßte unsre Wittenbergische Ordnung annehmen." Er setzte sich also für Mannigfaltigkeit und Freiheit ein; anderseits lag ihm an einer gewissen Ordnung, damit nicht all-

gemeine Willkür einreiße. Darum stellt er es als Ideal hin, daß „es fein wäre, wenn in einer jeglichen Herrschaft der Gottesdienst auf einerlei Weise ginge und die umliegenden Städte und Dörfer mit einer Stadt es gleicher Weise hielten."

Nun hatte sich in Deutschland eine gewisse liturgisch-agendarische Tradition und Ordnung heraus gebildet. Da kam der **Weltkrieg.** Durch ihn wurden sowohl die Feldgeistlichen an der Front wie im Lazarett gezwungen, liturgisch, je nach den Umständen, selbständig vorzugehen. Und auch der Gemeindepastor in der Heimat mußte nach neuen Formulierungen suchen, z. B. für die Kriegsbetstunden, nach neuen Gebetsvorlagen, die der veränderten Zeitlage Rechnung trugen. Die drei Teile der „Agende für Kriegszeiten," die damals Arper und Zillesen 1914 und 1915 herausgaben, hat vielen wesentliche Dienste geleistet. Als der Krieg dann 1918 zu Ende ging, entstand, damals in kleinem, wenig beachtetem Kreis, die sogenannte **„Hochkirchliche Bewegung."** Sie hat mit der gleichnamigen Bewegung in England im 19. Jahrhundert nur den Namen gemein. Sie ging ihre eigenen Wege, lehnte für sich grundsätzlich auch katholisierende Tendenzen ab. In zunehmendem Maße fand sie in jenen Jahren in der Oeffentlichkeit Beachtung und verstand es, durch ihre Zeitschrift „Die Hochkirche" weitere Kreise zu erfassen. Die „hochkirchliche Vereinigung" will nicht nur eine liturgische Bewegung sein. Sie hat ihre besondre Auffassung von der Kirche, vom Pfarrer u. a. Aber am stärksten hat sie sich doch auf liturgischem Gebiet ausgewirkt. Sie befürwortete eine stärkere Bereicherung der Gottesdienste und wünschte „ein maßvolles Zurücktreten der Predigt, eine stärkere Betonung der heiligen Sakramente und ihres objektiven Charakters und eine reichere liturgische Ausgestaltung." Durch würdigen Schmuck der Kirche und des Altars, durch Kirchenmusik, durch mannigfaltigen Ornat des Geistlichen, im Anschluß an die altkirchliche Entwicklung, sollte dem Sinn für das Schöne, Edle und echt Volkstümliche Rechnung getragen werden. Sie veranstaltete, besonders in den Großstädten, eigene Gottesdienste. Dabei zeigte es sich, daß eine katholisierende Haltung doch nicht immer vermieden wurde. Mit Recht wurde an sich von Liturgen der Hochkirche der Satz vertreten, daß nicht alles zu verwerfen ist, weil es die „römisch-katholische Kirche vertritt" (O. Mehl). Sie ist ja auch die Erbin der altchristlichen und altkirchlichen Ueberlieferung und Luthers „Deutsche Messe" und der lutherische Gottesdienst ist ja kein grundsätzlich neuer liturgischer Entwurf, sondern ein vorsichtiger Umbau, nur unter Ausscheidung der widerbiblischen Elemente. Darauf aufmerksam gemacht zu haben, ist ein wesentliches Verdienst der hochkirchlichen Bewegung. Sie hat den Sinn für das Dekorum, vor allem bei dem Liturgen selbst, den Sinn für ein würdiges Verhalten im gottesdienstlichen

Raum auch bei der Gemeinde, nicht nur während, sondern auch vor und nach dem Gottesdienst, geschärft und gebessert. Echt evangelisch war auch der Grundsatz einer stärkeren Beteiligung der Gemeinde, einer größeren Selbsttätigkeit im Gottesdienst durch Wechselleſungen, Wechselgesänge. Aber heute hat die Bewegung ihren Höhepunkt hinter sich. Nur gewisse Anregungen werden bleiben, erstens daß gegenüber einem alles Kirchentum verachtenden Subjektivismus die „Kirche“ ernsthaft genommen wird; zweitens daß gegenüber der zu weit getriebenen Zersplitterung im evangelischen Lager zur Einheit gerufen wird; drittens, daß gegenüber der weitgehenden Gleichgültigkeit gegen Gottesdienst und kirchliche Uebung, deren Segen betont wird (Schian).

Als Beispiel einer liturgischen Bewegung im Nachkriegsdeutschland muß ferner die **Christengemeinschaft** namhaft gemacht werden. Sie vertritt z. T. ähnliche Gedanken und kommt doch von einer ganz andern Richtung her an die gottesdienstlichen Fragen heran. Die Christengemeinschaft entstand 1922 in Süddeutschland. Es schlossen sich ihr vor allem intellektuelle Kreise an, in erster Linie solche, die irgendwie der anthroposophischen Richtung Rudolf Steiners angehörten oder nahestanden. Auch die Christengemeinschaft ist nicht nur eine liturgische Bewegung, hat aber durch ihre neuen Formen auf diesem Gebiet vor allem die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gezogen. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, der Erz-Oberlenker, hat es mit einem ganz neuen Kultus, der sogenannten **Menschenweihehandlung,** versucht. Hier wirken Strebungen der alten Mysterien, aber ebenso die katholische Messe nach. Die Menschenweihehandlung ist ein „fortlaufendes Christusgeschehen.“ Stark ausgebaut ist eine Symbolik. Der ganze Verlauf ist angelehnt an den Jahreskreislauf als Abbild der großen kosmisch-göttlichen Weltentwicklung. Neben der Evangeliumsverkündigung herrscht das Sakramentale vor; man zählt wieder sieben Sakramente. Man lehrt eine Art „Transsubstantiation.“ Die Christengemeinschaft ist im Laufe der Jahre immer mehr außerkirchliche Wege gegangen, wenn auch kein Zwang für die Mitglieder besteht, aus der Kirchengemeinschaft auszutreten. Die Menschenweihehandlung wird z. B. dort, wo sie gehalten wird, zur selben Stunde angesetzt wie der kirchliche Gottesdienst! Auch diese Bewegung hat wohl äußerlich und innerlich ihren Höhepunkt überschritten. Wir mußten diese Bewegung erwähnen, da sie als solche typisch für das neu erwachte kultische Interesse ist, wenn sie es auch einseitig befriedigt. Ferner herrscht auch hier Sinn für Lebendigkeit, ein stark ausgeprägtes Formgefühl, ein Gefühl für Würde und ein Streben nach Innerlichkeit und Wahrhaftigkeit. Zum Beispiel wird das oft so gedankenlos gebrauchte „Amen“ vermieden. Dafür spricht ein Priesterchor oder die Gemeinde, je nach dem Sinn, am Schluß des Gebetes: „So ist es!“ oder „So sei es!“

Innerhalb der evangelischen Kirche sind Vorkämpfer einer liturgischen Reform die beiden früheren Straßburger Professoren **Spitta** und **Smend** gewesen. Sie wandten sich gegen die Verachtung der Form in den Gottesdiensten. Sie kämpften gegen die vielfältige Geschmacklosigkeit und Stillosigkeit des kultischen Raumes* und Handelns. Sie bemühten sich um einen lebendigen Sinn aller Teile des Gottesdienstes. Sie forderten Volkstümlichkeit und Volksgebundenheit der gottesdienstlichen Form, unter Anknüpfung an die vorhandenen Volkssitten. Zur Pflege der **Kirchenmusik** riefen sie die Pastoren, die Lehrer, die Gesangvereine auf. In einer besonderen Zeitschrift „Für Gottesdienst und Kunst" verschafften sie ihren Bestrebungen in der theologischen und kirchlichen Oeffentlichkeit Gehör. Auch die **Gesangbuch**fragen faßten Spitta und Smend vor allem ins Auge. Sie schufen das neue elsässische Gesangbuch, das vorbildlich für alle späteren geworden ist.

Und gerade die Gesangbuchnot ist in der jüngsten Zeit in stärkstem Maße empfunden worden. Es gab in Deutschland eine unendliche Fülle von verschiedenen Gesangbüchern in all den verschiedenen Landeskirchen und Landesteilen. Bei der Freizügigkeit und dem häufigen Wechsel des Wohnortes führten diese verschiedenen Gesangbücher, ihre verschiedenen Texte und Singweisen zu großen Schwierigkeiten. Es entstand der Wunsch, womöglich ein einheitliches deutsch-evangelisches Reichs-Gesangbuch zu bekommen. Dieser weitestgehende Reformplan hat sich bis jetzt nicht verwirklichen lassen. Aber eine größere Einheit ist erzielt worden, indem fast alle neu erschienen Gesangbücher in einem ersten Teil einen Grundstock von 342 Liedern des allgemeinen „deutsch-evangelischen Gesangbuches" enthalten, das vom Kirchenausschuß für die deutschen Auslandsgemeinden geschaffen worden war. Ein zweiter Teil enthält dann für die verschiedenen Kirchen und Gebiete weitere wertvolle Lieder, die herkömmlich in ihnen vor allem gesungen wurden. So ist eine große Vereinheitlichung erzielt worden, besonders da größere Gebiete, wie Rheinland und Westfalen oder Brandenburg und Pommern sich für die Neuordnung zusammengeschlossen haben. Bei der Schaffung dieser Gesangbücher haben für die Lieder und Melodien zwei Gesichtspunkte mitgewirkt, nämlich erstens: das Erbgut der Väter, vor allem aus der Reformationszeit, so stark wie möglich heranzuziehen; auch hier eine Abkehr vom Subjektiven zu starker Betonung des Objektiven. Anderseits war der Wunsch lebendig, gerade auch Lieder der neuesten Zeit aufzunehmen, möglichst von lebenden Dichtern (z. B. Gustav Schüler), um die Gegenwart zu ihrem Recht kommen zu lassen. Die neuen Gesang-

* Auf die Entwicklung des Kirchbaustils bis in die jüngste Vergangenheit hier näher einzugehen, würde zu weit führen.

bücher sind sämtlich mit Noten versehen und auch in der Form geschmackvoll und schön ausgestattet.

Starke liturgische Anregungen hat die sogenannte **Berneuchener Konferenz** vermittelt, an deren Spitze W. Stählin, K. V. Ritter und L. Heitmann stehen. Von den Veröffentlichungen dieses Kreises seien genannt: „Das Berneuchener Buch" (1926), das Jahrbuch „Gottesjahr," das seit 1924 erscheint, „Der deutsche Dom." Es ist diesem Kreis an einer Erneuerung der evangelischen Kirche und ihrer Lebensform gelegen. Und als Ansatzpunkt erscheint vor allem der Kultus. Was weite Kreise der **Jugendbewegung** innerlich beschäftigte, wird in dem Berneuchener Kreis ausgesprochen und hat dadurch Widerhall gefunden. Hinter der Jugendbewegung steht ein Zug zur Mystik. Gegenüber allem Rationalismus und Liberalismus werden die Vorrechte des Gefühls und des Willens betont. Schmuck und Form im Gottesdienst werden zu Mitteln, die Andacht und Ehrfurcht, heilige Weihe und Scheu kundzutun und zu wecken. Durchschlagend hat hier Rudolf Ottos Buch über „Das Heilige" sich ausgewirkt.

Eine vielseitige liturgische Aussprache wurde auch bedingt durch ganz **neue** gottesdienstliche **Aufgaben,** die die Zeit nach Krieg und Revolution mit sich brachten.* Die Jugendbewegung drang auch in die kirchliche Vereinsarbeit ein. Zeitgemäße Jugendgottesdienste mußten gestaltet werden, Sonntag morgens, ehe man auf Fahrt ging; draußen im Wald, wenn man lagerte; abends, wenn auf der Höhe das Sonnwendfeuer angezündet war. Da der Sonntag nicht nur für die Jugend, sondern auch für die Erwachsenen, vor allem in den Städten, immer mehr der Wandertag, der Reisetag wurde, den man im Freien, auf dem Land zubringen wollte, entstand die Frage, wie diese Kreise gottesdienstlich erfaßt werden könnten. Von da her bürgerten sich die Wochenendgottesdienste Sonnabend abends ein. Sie waren stark liturgisch ausgestaltet; nur eine kurze Ansprache des Geistlichen wurde gehalten. Die Orgel, ein Chor, Solisten wirkten stark mit. Ueberhaupt bürgerten sich auch liturgische Andachten ein, zu denen gar keine Ansprachen gehörten. Die Organisten versuchten es mit „musikalischen Feierstunden," die Mittwoch abends oder Sonntag nachmittags abgehalten wurden und große Scharen von Andächtigen anzogen. Gerade auch

* Erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit wird auch den Kasualien liturgisch gewidmet, den Taufen, Trauungen und Beerdigungen, da bei diesen Handlungen weite Kreise erfaßt werden, die an den regelmäßigen Gemeindegottesdiensten nur selten oder gar nicht mehr teilnehmen. Von dem Kirchenbuch von Arper und Zillesen sind bei Vandenhoek und Rupprecht besondre Bände erschienen, in denen reichhaltiges Material für alle diese Handlungen dargeboten wird. Vergleiche auch die liturgischen Blätter (seit 1927) von Mensching — Otto — Wallau.

klassische Kirchenmusik, wie die von Heinrich Schütz, Johann Sebastian Bach u. a. wurde hier gepflegt. Auch die großen Oratorien und Passionen wurden häufig in Kirchen und Sälen aufgeführt und wirkten stark auf weite Kreise.

Bei der Gestaltung des **Hauptgottesdienstes** wurde danach getrachtet, ihn ganz **einheitlich** zu gestalten. Theodor Voß in Kiel hatte 1915 die Forderung literarisch erhoben: Der Gottesdienst als liturgische Einheit! Die bereits erwähnten Liturgiker Arper und Zillesen gaben eine Agende „Das evangelische Kirchenbuch" (Göttingen) heraus, in der diese Forderung verwirklicht war. Wie für die festliche Zeit, so wurde für die Trinitatissonntage danach gestrebt, den gesamten Gottesdienst unter einen einheitlichen Gesichtspunkt zu rücken. Ein **Beispiel** möge hier angeführt werden. Gesamtthema: In der Stille. Eingangslied: Gott ist gegenwärtig. Eingangswort: Psalm 65, 2 und 3: Gott, man lobt dich in der Stille. Das Bußwort beginnt mit dem Satz: „Heiliger Gott, wir flüchten uns an dein Herz aus des Tages Lärm, aus den Gedanken, die sich untereinander verklagen und entschuldigen ... Vergib uns alle Zerstreutheit und Ungesammeltheit, alle Andachtlosigkeit und allen Kleinglauben. Laß uns still werden in dir." Gnadenwort: Kommet her zu mir alle, die ihr mühselig und beladen seid . . ., so werdet ihr Ruhe finden für eure Seelen. Gebet: „Gott und Vater, nun sind wir mit dir allein. Schließe unsre Seelenpforte für die Wogen der geschäftigen Welt. Tritt du ein mit deiner Klarheit und deinem Frieden. Und die du schon abseits geführt hattest durch Hemmung und Leid, denen begegne erst recht zu tieferer Sammlung. Oeffne unser Ohr, daß wir Kraft und Stille finden in dir und gestärkt wieder hinausgehen an unsers Lebens Arbeit und über dem Schaffen doch mit dir verbunden und in dir gestillt bleiben. Amen." Schriftlesung: 1. Könige 19, 3—15a. Predigtlied:

Zions Stille soll sich breiten
Um mein Sorgen, meine Pein,
Denn die Stimmen Gottes läuten
Frieden, ewgen Frieden ein.

Ebnen soll sich jede Welle,
Denn mein König will sich nahn,
Nur an einer stillen Stelle
Legt Gott seinen Anker an.

Was gewesen, werde stille,
Stille, was dereinst wird sein.
All mein Wunsch und all mein Wille
Geh in Gottes Wielln ein. R. Kögel.

(Nach der Melodie: „Ringe recht, wenn Gottes Gnade.")

Predigttext: Psalm 62, 2: Meine Seele ist stille zu Gott, der mir hilft. Schlußgebet: „Herr Gott, nimm unsern Dank für alle Segnungen, die wir in stillen Stunden von dir erfahren haben, Dank dafür, daß du uns auch heute nahe warst. Geh wieder mit uns ins Geräusch der Welt, und verlaß uns auf keinem unsrer Wege mit deinem Frieden."

Wenn dann die Gemeinde entlassen wird mit dem Segensgruß, ausklingend in das Wort: „Er gebe uns seinen Frieden," dann muß ein starker und nachwirkender Eindruck erzielt werden, so daß die Gottesdienstbesucher die ganze Woche hindurch ihren Weg gehen unter dem Wort:

„Seid still und stark, Seid stark und still,
Der über euch waltet, Weiß, was er will."

(Fr. Lienhard.)

In ähnlicher Weise sind alle Gottesdienste einheitlich ausgestaltet unter den Ueberschriften: Sehnsucht nach Gott. Offenbarung. Gott in der Schöpfung. Gott in der Geschichte. Gott in Jesus Christus. Der verborgene Gott. Barmherzigkeit. Hoffnung. Berufstreue. Christliches Kämpfen. Gemeinschaft mit Jesus. Versuchung. Tod und Ewigkeit u. a.

Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wurde auch den **Abendmahlsfeiern** geschenkt. Der Sinn für das Irrationale, das Mystische, das Sakramentale war wieder erwacht. Da wuchsen die Teilnehmerzahlen an den Abendmahlsfeiern. So wurden auch hier alte und neue Wege erprobt. Die Hochkirche stellte die Forderung auf: Kein Gottesdienst ohne eucharistische Feier. In andern Gegenden wurden gerade gesonderte Abendmahlsfeiern veranstaltet. Allgemein stärker wurde der Charakter der Eucharistie, d. h. des Dankes und der Freude betont. Die Beichte wurde von der Abendmahlsfeier getrennt, vor den Hauptgottesdienst, an den Sonnabend Abend gelegt, damit hier der Gedanke der Buße stark zur Geltung käme, während bei dem Genuß des Abendmahls freudiger Dank für die Vergebung, freudiges Bewußtsein von der Gegenwart des heiligen und gnädigen Gottes spürbar würde.

Immer von neuem verhandelt wurde die Frage nach der Formung der **Gebete** im Gottesdienst. Hier standen sich die entgegengesetzten Anschauungen gegenüber. Von der einen Seite wurde der Charakter der Feierlichkeit, der Tradition, des ehrwürdigen Alters betont. Es wurden altkirchliche Gebete herangezogen. Die Bibel, vor allem die Psalmen wurden zur Vorlage genommen. Das Gut der Reformationszeit wurde lebendig gemacht. Im Bärenreiter-Verlag erschien eine „Luther-Agende. Ein Kirchenbuch aus Luthers Schrifttum." Zusammengestellt von Otto Dietz. 1928. Und entschieden liegt hier viel Wertvolles, wie in den Abendmahlsgebeten

der Didache oder bei den Vätern unsrer Kirche. Als Probe sei ein Beichtgebet des Savonarola abgedruckt:

„Gott, du Barmherzigkeit, nimm hinweg meine Sünden; denn sie sind mein größtes Elend. Richte mich Elenden auf, zeige an mir dein Werk, übe aus an mir deine Kraft. Der Abgrund des Elends ruft den Abgrund der Barmherzigkeit. Der Abgrund der Sünden ruft den Abgrund der Gnaden. Größer ist der Abgrund der Barmherzigkeit als der Abgrund des Elends. So verschlinge denn, du Abgrund der Barmherzigkeit, den Abgrund des Elends, und erbarme dich unser!"

Daneben wurde versucht, die Dichtung und die religiöse Lyrik der Gegenwart auch im Gottesdienst zur Geltung zu bringen, um dadurch dem modernen Menschen aus dem Herzen zu sprechen und die Sprache zu reden, in der er denkt und redet. Dieser Weg war einst von Geyer und Rittelmeyer beschritten worden; er wurde jetzt von neuem versucht. Und gute Liedersammlungen wie die von Knevels, Brücken zum Ewigen (Wollermann, Braunschweig) oder Würtenberg, Wirrnis und Ewigkeit (Westdeutscher Lutherverlag, Witten) boten reiches Material. So wertvolle religiöse und christliche Klänge in vielen der Gedichte vorhanden sind, eignen sie sich aber doch kaum für den Gemeindegottesdienst. Sie sind gar zu subjektiv gefärbt. Und in der Gemeindefeier muß doch das Objektive, Allgemeine, stärker zum Ausdruck kommen.

Vollständigkeit kann nicht Aufgabe unsrer Uebersicht sein. Wir müßten sonst auch von den liturgischen Bewegungen innerhalb der **katholischen** Kirche sprechen. Romano Guardini, der Benediktinerorden haben sich viel mit den liturgischen Fragen abgegeben, und ihre Gedanken sind auch auf evangelischer Seite mit Interesse verfolgt und beachtet worden. Auf der entgegengesetzten Seite bildeten sich liturgische Ansätze selbst in der Freidenkerbewegung. Nachdem die Freidenker lange Zeit die kirchlichen Einrichtungen lächerlich gemacht hatten, merkten sie, daß sie ihre Anhänger nur dann bei sich halten konnten, wenn sie einen liturgischen Ersatz dafür boten. So entstanden die sogenannten „Jugendweihen," dazu liturgische Feiern bei den Einäscherungen, Lebensweihen bei Geburt und Eheschließung. Diese Entwicklung ist durch Auflösung der Freidenkerorganisationen, infolge ihrer engen Verquickung mit der marxistischen Politik, zum Stillstand gekommen.

Aufs Ganze gesehen muß auch für das Gesamtgebiet der Kirche festgestellt werden, daß alle die verschiedenen liturgischen Bestrebungen keine wirklich große durchschlagende „Bewegung" geworden sind. Das Interesse wandte sich in der letzten Zeit wieder stärker den homiletischen und religionspädagogischen Fragen zu. Aber wertvolle Anregungen sind ausgegangen und wirken nach. Alle Fragen sind

erneut in Fluß gekommen. Es wird ein Ausgleich gesucht zwischen dem berechtigt Subjektiven und dem notwendig Objektiven in der liturgischen Gestaltung des Gottesdienstes und in der Haltung des einzelnen Liturgen. Während die eine Gruppe das liturgische Erbgut hoch einschätzt und den Zusammenhang mit den Ueberlieferungen der Väter pflegt, unterstreicht die entgegengesetzte Gruppe die Notwendigkeiten der Gegenwart, jeder neuen Gegenwart. Es wird das rechte Verhältnis zwischen Ordnung und Freiheit herzustellen versucht. Denn in der Praxis der Kirche wird leicht aus der Ordnung: Zwang in der einzelnen Gemeinde, und aus der Freiheit: Willkür. Neuer Sinn für Form, für Stil und Würde ist erwacht und sucht für die Gegenwart die rechte Ausprägung. Die gewaltige Umordnung der evangelischen Kirche und die Ausgestaltung der einen deutsch-evangelischen Kirche im ganzen Reich haben zur Zeit die liturgischen Fragen in den Hintergrund gedrängt. Aber wenn die Organisations- und Verfassungsfragen geregelt sind, werden auch die liturgischen Ordnungen gefunden werden müssen, wobei die Erfahrungen und die Ergebnisse all der oben erwähnten liturgischen Bestrebungen nutzbar gemacht werden können.

Die Sakramente.

Dr. G. Fr. Schuetze.

In der Märznummer des Magazins lasen wir eine Abhandlung: „Was kann das bißchen Wasser helfen?“ Dieser Aufsatz hat mir keine Ruhe gelassen, bis ich auch meine Ansicht darüber aufs Papier brachte. Zwar sind meine Auffassungen von denen des verehrten Herrn Herausgebers diametral verschieden. Viele, die seine Anschauungen teilen, werden meine Stellung für unhaltbar erklären; andre wiederum, die meiner Meinung sind, werden mir beipflichten und meine Anschauung als vollkommen schriftgemäß und logisch erklären. Alles zusammen genommen, sind die von Herrn Dr. Kamphausen vertretenen Anschauungen die der Reformierten Kirche, während die meinen die der „mild“ Lutherischen sind. Naturgemäß weichen wir da von einander ab. Desto mehr bin ich ihm zum wärmsten Dank verpflichtet, daß er mir dennoch in einer der letzten Nummern des „Theologischen Magazins“ Raum zur Darlegung meiner Anschauung über die Lehre von der heiligen Taufe gewährt hat. Ich möchte nun aber das Thema erweitern und mich nicht allein auf die heilige Taufe beschränken, sondern von den Sakramenten überhaupt reden.

Was ist denn nun ein Sakrament? Die Schuldefinition ist ja allgemein bekannt, sodaß nicht nötig ist, davon zu reden. Ich möchte nur die drei Komponenten herausheben, die ein Sakrament ausmachen. Es sind: 1. die Einsetzung durch den Herrn Jesus selber; 2. die äußerlichen Zeichen oder Elemente, und 3. die Heilswirkung. Unsre Diskussion soll sich nun in der Hauptsache auf die letztere beschränken. Ich will versuchen darzulegen, daß die Heilswirkung des Sakramentes in der realen Mitteilung von Heilsgütern besteht, daß also der Hauptton auf der Tätigkeit Gottes und nicht auf der des Empfängers liegt.

In der griechischen Sprache, sowohl der klassischen, wie der neutestamentlichen, wird für unsern Begriff Sakrament das Wort „Mysterion“ gebraucht (vergleiche die Eleusinischen Mysterien) als etwas Geheimes und Geheimnisvolles. Im Lateinischen steht für Mysterion das Wort „sacramentum,“ das unter andern Bedeutungen auch den Fahneneid des römischen Soldaten bezeichnet. An diesen Sinn nun knüpft der kirchliche Sprachgebrauch an. Wie der Soldat bei dem Eintritt in das Heer durch den Fahneneid an seine Pflicht gekettet wird, so wird der Streiter Jesu durch seinen Eintritt in die Gemeinschaft Christi, durch die Taufe, unauflöslich an seinen Herren gebunden. Der Begriff des Geheimnisses kommt dabei gar nicht in Betracht. Tertullian bezieht nun das Wort „sacramentum“ in ganz besondrer Weise auf die beiden, von Gott geordneten, Handlungen, die Taufe und das Abendmahl. Erstere

habe der Herr vor seiner Himmelfahrt, letzteres vor seinem Tod anbefohlen.

Damit ist nun der erste Begriff der Sakramentsidee gegeben. Für den zweiten kommt besonders Augustin in Betracht, der ja überhaupt in der Sakramentslehre eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Bekannt ist sein Wort: „Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum." Für den dritten essentiellen Teil, die Gnadenwirkung der Sakramente, können wir uns neben der Bibel auf Tertullian berufen. („De resurrect.," C. 8.) Auch Cyprian betont nachdrücklich die „sacramenta salutaria." (Ep. LXIX.) Damit sind wir nun auf den Kernpunkt unsrer Abhandlung gekommen, nämlich auf die Frage: **Haben die Sakramente eine reale, definitive Wirkung zum Heil, zum ewigen Leben, auf den gläubigen Empfänger?** Ich behaupte es mit aller Entschiedenheit und stütze mich für diese These nicht etwa auf Tertullian, Augustin usw., sondern auf die klaren Worte in der Heiligen Schrift.

Rekapitulieren wir zuerst in aller Kürze die Herrenworte über die Sakramente. Bezüglich der Taufe wird in den Einsetzungsworten bei Matthäus klar gesagt, daß durch die Taufe die Menschen zu Jüngern des Herrn gemacht werden. Viel ausdrücklicher ist Markus 16, 16. Da aber die Echtheit dieser Stelle bezweifelt wird (sie wird dem Aristion zugeschrieben), so wollen wir kein besonderes Gewicht weiter auf sie legen. Es bleibt uns also aus den Worten des Herrn als Heilswirkung nur die Aufnahme in die Jüngerschaft Jesu. Unbestreitbar ist dagegen die ausdrücklich betonte Heilswirkung im heiligen Abendmahl, „zur Vergebung der Sünde." Es wird also beiden Sakramenten aus den „ipsissima Dei verba" eine kräftige Heilswirkung zugeschrieben; denn auch die Jüngerschaft des Herren führt zum Heil. Es ist mir unverständlich, wie man angesichts der klaren Worte Jesu die Sakramente zu Gedächtnishandlungen herabwürdigen kann, bei denen die Haupttätigkeit auf die Seite des empfangenden Menschen gelegt wird. Nein, das Sakrament ist eine Handlung Gottes, die dem Menschen zum Heil hilft. Es fragt sich nur, worin die Heilswirkung besteht, und wer ihrer teilhaftig werden kann?

Die Aufnahme in die Jüngerschaft Christi ist in der Heiligen Schrift stets nur solchen zuteil geworden, die seinem Ruf und Einladung folgten und im Glauben zu ihm kamen. Wenn also die heilige Taufe die Aufnahme in die Jüngerschaft ist, so muß sie in dem Täufling dieselbe Wirkung ausüben, wie zu Lebzeiten Jesu das von ihm gesprochene Wort. Sie muß in dem Getauften eben denselben Glauben hervorrufen, den Jesu „Folge mir nach" in seinen Aposteln erweckte.

Das kann nur bestritten werden, wenn wir entweder die Fähigkeit des Kindes leugnen, den Glauben zu empfangen, oder wenn

wir die Notwendigkeit des Glaubens für ein Kind abstreiten. Es wird sich lohnen, auf diese beiden Eventualitäten näher einzugehen. Die letztere können wir allerdings mit nur ganz wenig Worten abtun, nämlich, daß die Erbsünde auch dem Kind schon anhaftet, und daß niemand ohne den Glauben zu Gott kommen kann.

Die andre, viel schwierigere Frage aber ist: Ist das Kind, der Säugling, schon imstande zu glauben? Der natürliche Mensch, auch der moderne Wissenschaftler, sagt nein. Das wirkt anfänglich, bei oberflächlicher Betrachtung, recht bestechend, zumal man auf den Augenschein hinweisen kann. Aber dann entsteht ein neues Dilemma: Entweder wir stellen mit dieser Antwort unsre Kinder auf dieselbe, niedrige Stufe mit dem Vieh, das wir auch nicht taufen, weil es nicht glauben kann; oder aber, wir müssen den Zeitpunkt angeben können, wenn auch nur ungefähr, in welchem das Kind für den Glauben empfänglich wird. Der erstere Punkt bedarf keiner Widerlegung. Im letzteren Fall aber entsteht die Unterfrage: Geschieht dieses Empfänglichwerden plötzlich, in einem Augenblick? Oder ist es ein langsamer Evolutionsprozeß? Wollen wir letzteres bejahen, so müssen wir fragen nach der biblischen Begründung dieser These und nach dem Zeitpunkt, in welchem die Evolution so weit abgeschlossen ist, daß das Kind zu glauben vermag? Wir sehen, daß die Verneinung der Glaubensmöglichkeit im Kind uns zu einer ganzen großen Zahl von Fragen führen muß. Gehen wir sie der Reihe nach durch.

Ist unser Kind ein Tier? Diese Formulierung der Frage erübrigt der Antwort. Damit ist die These schon „ad absurdum" geführt. Wird aber das Kind erst im Laufe seiner Entwicklung zum Glauben befähigt, dann: Wann tritt dieser Zeitpunkt ein? Auch hier wird man in Verlegenheit geraten, einen Termin zu fixieren. Es gibt zu viele, verschiedene Geistesanlagen. Ganz abgesehen von dem „Intelligence Quotient" (I. Q.) und der „Innate Intelligence" (I. I.), wird kein Kind ganz genau denselben Entwicklungsgang gehen, wie das andre. Bei dem einen Kind sehen wir schon im zartesten Alter die innigste Hingabe an den Gott, den allerdings sein junger Verstand noch nicht zu fassen vermag. (N. B. Wer von uns Theologen vermag denn Gott in seiner ganzen Transzendentalität zu **begreifen**?) Bei dem andern Kind dagegen sehen wir noch im beginnenden Mannesalter einen absoluten Mangel an solcher Hingabe, sodaß man von einer Unfähigkeit zur Selbsthingabe reden könnte. Aber selbst wenn wir, um weiter argumentieren zu können, für den Augenblick die Unmöglichkeit des Kinderglaubens annehmen wollen, kommt die Frage an uns heran: Entsteht eine solche Glaubensbefähigung plötzlich oder stufenweise? Es dürfte sehr schwer fallen, auf psychologischen Gründen sich stützend, zu einer oder der andern Antwort zu gelangen. Wenn

eine solche Glaubensreife ganz plötzlich einträte, so hätte in den neunzehn Jahrhunderten doch zum allermindesten **ein** Fall davon berichtet sein müssen; hätte bei den unzähligen Millionen von Menschen sich doch bei einem einzigen wenigstens eine Erinnerung an einen solchen Vorgang finden müssen. Da das aber nicht der Fall ist, noch je gewesen ist, so können wir diese Idee, als nicht der Wirklichkeit entsprechend, ruhig „ad acta" legen. Ist aber die Glaubensbefähigung eine Folge oder ein Abschluß einer Entwicklung, dann haben wir hier in einem andern Gewand die schon längst zur Genüge widerlegte Behauptung, daß das Tier in der Evolution sich zum Menschen entwickle. Mag sich diese These noch so sehr in das Löwenfell angeblicher Wissenschaftlichkeit hüllen, die langen Ohren verraten es doch. Dazu aber kommt noch, daß die Evolution mit viel längeren Perioden rechnet und nie mit einer Entwicklung in dem kurzen Zeitraum des Lebens eines Individuums.

Allen diesen Schwierigkeiten aber gehen wir aus dem Weg, wenn wir mit unserm Deutschen Katechismus auf die Frage: Warum sollen auch die Kinder getauft werden? antworten: „Weil das neue Leben ist ein Gnadengeschenk Gottes, welches zu empfangen die Kinder ebenso fähig und bedürftig sind" usw. Was, meines Erachtens, den Kindern allein mangelt, ist das Sprachvermögen. In der Tat halte ich ganz unbedingt dafür, daß die heilige Taufe eine wirkliche Wirkung auf das Kind ausübt. Die spöttische Frage: Was kann das bißchen Wasser helfen? zeigt einen Mangel an Verständnis des Wesens der Sakramente, der dem des Nikodemus ganz ähnlich ist, wenn er fragt: Kann auch ein Mensch von neuem geboren werden? Das Wasser tut's freilich nicht, sondern das Wort. Das Sakrament ist das sichtbar gewordene Wort. Eine Leugnung der Kraft der Sakramente selig zu machen, schließt auch ein die Leugnung der Kraft des Wortes Gottes zur Seligkeit. Wir behaupten nicht eine magische Wirkung des Wassers der Taufe. Das lehnen wir ebenso entschieden ab, wie der Herausgeber; aber wir behaupten ganz energisch eine innerliche geheimnisvolle Wirkung des Wortes Gottes in der heiligen Taufe. Gewiß, die Aufnahme des Kindes in die Gemeinschaft mit Christus, also in die Kirche, ist unauflöslich mit der Taufe verbunden; aber ist das nicht gerade solch Geheimnis wie, daß Gott überhaupt den sündigen Menschen aus Liebe in seine Gemeinschaft aufnehmen kann? Die Pflanzung des Glaubens in der heiligen Taufe ist kein größeres Geheimnis als das „kündlich große, gottselige Geheimnis, daß Gott ist geoffenbaret im Fleisch."

In bezug auf das Verhältnis von Taufe und Wiedergeburt halte ich dafür, daß die Taufe **der Anfang** der Wiedergeburt ist, nicht die vollkommene oder abgeschlossene Wiedergeburt. Das Neue Testament bezeichnet die Taufe als das Bad der Wiedergeburt (Tit.

3, 5), und zwar möchte ich diese neue Geburt als eine generelle oder potentielle bezeichnen, die Wiedergeburt aus dem Wasser, auf welche später die individuelle Wiedergeburt aus dem Geist folgen muß. In Joh. 3, 5 verlangt der Herr die Wiedergeburt aus dem Wasser **und** dem Geist. Deshalb wollen wir nicht ultraradikal die Taufe als die vollendete Wiedergeburt darstellen, wohl aber als die Vorbedingung, die Kraft und die Grundlage der Wiedergeburt. Ohne zuerst von Christo durch die Taufe berufen zu sein, kann der Mensch später nicht zur Wiedergeburt aus dem Geist gelangen. Gewiß ist nicht jeder, der aus dem Wasser wiedergeboren ist, auch nachher aus dem Geist wiedergeboren. Wohl aber ist jeder, der später aus dem Geist wiedergeboren ist, dazu befähigt worden durch das vorangegangene Bad der Wiedergeburt aus dem Wasser.

Die Bemerkungen des Herrn Verfassers der Märznummer über die Wirkung auf die Eltern und die Gemeinde sind zwar wohl sehr richtig, aber sie umgehen den Hauptpunkt, daß das Getauftwerden ein Annehmen Christi (Kol. 2, 6), ein Anziehen Christi (Gal. 3, 27), ein mit ihm in den Tod begraben sein (Röm. 6) ist. Sehr richtig sagt dagegen der Herr Verfasser, „daß man sie (scil. die Taufe) nicht einerseits zu einer bloß äußerlichen Form herabdrücke und anderseits keine magische Wirkung erwarte." Begnügen wir uns damit, daß das Sakrament ein Mysterium ist. Wir vermögen nicht in Gottes Geheimnisse hineinzuschauen (Röm. 11, 32—33). „God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." Es bliebe doch noch zu beweisen, daß „das Kind versteht nichts von dem, was der Pastor sagt und tut." Freilich, wenn wir die Gnadengaben Gottes mit dem Verstand empfangen, so kann das Kind es nicht verstehen. Aber das Organon des Empfangens der göttlichen Gnaden ist **nicht** der Verstand, sondern der inwendige Mensch, dessen Gesetze uns verborgen sind.

In Bezug nun auf das Sakrament des Nachtmahls liegt doch die Frage ganz anders, weil man hier nicht wohl von der Unfähigkeit des Empfängers, es zu begreifen, reden kann. (Natürlich nur in so weit, als überhaupt ein Mensch Gottes Wesen und Gottes Tun begreifen kann.) Und doch ist es letzten Endes dieselbe große Frage, die Luther in die Worte faßt: Wie kann leiblich Essen und Trinken solch große Dinge tun? die auch ausgedrückt ist in: Was kann das bißchen Wasser helfen? Selbst der scharfsinnigste Philosoph oder der gelehrteste Theologe wird sich unfähig erklären müssen, wenn er erklären soll, wie Vergebung der Sünde, Leben und Seligkeit an den Bissen Brot und an den Schluck Wein geknüpft sein oder werden kann.

Wenn wir uns nunmehr an die biblische Begründung der Heilswirksamkeit des heiligen Abendmahls begeben, so werden wir

zunächst das ganze sechste Kapitel des Johannesevangeliums ausschließen müssen, weil es nicht von dem Abendmahl redet. Es stehen uns für die Wesensbestimmung des Sakramentes nur die vier Einsetzungsberichte zur Verfügung, von denen der Paulinische wohl die älteste und deshalb originalste Fassung bietet. Sie alle stimmen überein in den Worten: Das ist mein Leib. Es würde uns nun viel zu weit führen, über das „ist" zu schreiben; lassen wir das für diesmal auf sich beruhen. Desto stärker aber wollen und müssen wir betonen, daß in allen Berichten das „für euch" (beziehungsweise für viele) gebraucht wird. Liegt es da nicht auf der Hand, daß der Heiland selber das Mahl als ein heilbringendes aufgefaßt sehen will? Die Feier des Abendmahls als eines Gedächtnismahls kann sich nur auf Lukas und Paulus stützen, während die Urapostel Matthäus und Petrus (im Markusevangelium) von dieser Bedeutung schweigen. Ist nun aber der Genuß als eines Heilmittels von allen vier bezeugt, während nur zwei, wenn auch der Fassung nach ältesten, Berichte von dem Gedächtnismahl reden, so folgern wir daraus, daß auch damals schon der Empfang zum Heil als die Hauptsache galt. Diese Heilswirkung nun wird unzweideutig bezeichnet als „zur Vergebung der Sünde." Doch wie geschieht das? Da stehen wir wieder vor der großen Frage, von der wir ausgingen. Und wiederum müssen wir betonen, wie wir es schon bei der heiligen Taufe taten, daß das Wort des Herrn und der Glaube daran seitens der Empfänger die Hauptsache sind; die Elemente und die Art des Empfanges sind ganz nebensächlich. Auf den Glauben kommt es allein an. „Sola fide," allein durch den Glauben werden wir das Heilsgut des letzten Mahles Jesu mit seinen Jüngern empfangen. Ich wiederhole: Bei der Taufe sagten wir, daß die Taufe muß im Empfänger dasselbe bewirken, wie das Wort Jesu zu seiner Erdenzeit. So auch hier: Wie das Wort des Heilandes: Deine Sünde ist dir vergeben! keinen Zweifel in den so Angeredeten zuließ, sondern sie fröhlich und getrost wurden, so ist auch beim heiligen Nachtmahl dieselbe Heilswirkung beabsichtigt, nämlich die Tilgung alles Zweifels und die frohe Gewißheit, daß das Blut Jesu Christi, des Sohnes Gottes uns rein macht von aller Sünde. Die Heilswirkung der Kommunion besteht in der Stärkung des Glaubens und damit in der Gewißheit von Leben und Seligkeit.

Kommt es dann aber vor allen Dingen auf den Glauben an, so kann das Sakrament nicht „vescentibus," sondern nur „credentibus" dargereicht werden. Der Glaube ist es, der Essen und Trinken zu einem Sakrament macht. Und nur der Gläubige wird den Leib und das Blut des Erlösers genießen — wiederum reden wir nicht von der Art, wie wir genießen, ob Transsubstantiation, Konsubstantiation, oder Symbol —, aber der „unwürdig isset und

trinket," empfängt nicht den Leib und das Blut Jesu Christi, sondern eben nur Brot und Wein, aber eben damit das Gericht über sich selber. Der Zweck des Abendmahles ist die Mitteilung der Vergebung der Sünde. Wer also ohne lebendigen Glauben zu diesem Essen und Trinken kommt, wird der Vergebung **nicht** teilhaftig, sondern öffnet sich selber die Pforten der Verdammnis. Ein Schlüssel kann sowohl auf- wie zuschließen. Der Zweck des Abendmahlsgenusses ist die Mitteilung der Vergebung der Sünde. So kann uns die Kommunionsfeier ein Schlüssel sein, der uns Leben und Seligkeit erschließt, aber auf der andern Seite auch der Schlüssel, der uns den Himmel zusperrt.

Ist nun das Wort von der Vergebung der Sünde die Substanz der Abendmahlslehre, so folgt, daß dessen Aneignung der Wesenszweck der Feier ist. Nicht so, als ob im leiblichen Essen und Trinken beim Abendmahl die Vergebung der Sünde erworben würde — das geschah vor 1900 Jahren auf Golgatha — wohl aber die Austeilung und Aneignung des längst erworbenen Heilsgutes. Man wende mir nicht ein, daß das lutherische Lehre sei. Erstens glaube ich nicht, daß mit solcher Ansicht irgendein Kandidat ein Kolloquium vor einer lutherischen Behörde bestehen könnte, und selbst wenn es die reine lutherische Lehre wäre, was es nicht ist, was würde es schaden? So lange der Paragraph von der Evangelischen Gewissensfreiheit in Kraft und zu Recht besteht, ist diese auf der Betrachtung der „darauf bezüglichen Stellen der Heiligen Schrift" gegründete Lehrmeinung wohl berechtigt, zu Worte zu kommen. Mögen Amtsbrüder diese Auffassung als unhaltbar erklären, ich halte sie für die einzig haltbare. „Audiatur et altera pars."

„Si parva licet componere magnis": Das Himmelreich ist gleich einem Mann, der über Land zog, rufete seinen Knechten und zeigte ihnen einen unermeßlichen Goldschatz, den er zu den Wechslern getan hatte, auf daß jeder, der da wolle, sich einen Anteil daran holen könne und solle. Genau dasselbe geschieht im heiligen Sakrament. Der Goldschatz wurde auf Golgatha in die Bank gelegt, auf daß jeder einzige im heiligen Abendmahl durch den Glauben einen Anteil daran erlangen könne. Wiederholen wir, wer unwürdig isset und trinket, genießt eben nur Brot und Wein, aber sich selber zum Gericht und Verdammnis. Nur wer würdig, d. h. in rechtem Glauben, wahrer Buße und brünstiger Liebe zu seinem Erlöser ißt und trinkt, empfängt das Heilsgut des Abendmahls, die Stärkung des Glaubens. In diesem Satz liegt kein Widerspruch, daß man sagt, erst fordern wir Glauben und dann verheißen wir Glauben. Das ist ganz recht. Wir sehen eine endlose Kette: es geht aus Glauben zum Glauben. Wenn wir auch anfangs rufen müssen: Herr, ich glaube, hilf meinem Unglauben, so wird uns das heilige Mahl doch immer weiter fördern, sodaß

wir immer fester im Glauben werden, bis wir einst vom Glauben zum Schauen gelangen.

Alles in allem, beide Sakramente, die Taufe sowohl wie das Abendmahl, sind darin und dadurch Sakramente Gottes, daß sie sichtbare Abbilder und Unterpfänder der Gnade Gottes sind. Sie **reichen** den Gläubigen das **wirklich dar,** was sie bedeuten und anschaulich machen, nämlich die Taufe: die Aufnahme in die innigste Lebensgemeinschaft mit dem Erlöser, das Abendmahl: die engste Verbindung und damit die sicherste Gewährleistung des Heilsgutes, daß Jesus durch die Hingabe seines Leibes und Blutes in den Tod für uns erwarb, nämlich die Vergebung der Sünde.

Noch eins zum Abschluß: Der populäre Aberglaube erwartet von dem Genuß der Sakramente auch eine körperliche Wirkung irgendwelcher Art. Wenn ein Kind krank wird, so soll die Taufe ihm zur Genesung verhelfen. Liegt ein Mensch auf dem Sterbebett, und haben alle Heilmittel der ärztlichen Wissenschaft nicht gefruchtet, so soll der Genuß des Abendmahls noch eine Wendung zum Besseren erzielen und erzwingen. Das ist natürlich die ganz fälschlich erwartete „magische Wirkung," die nun und nimmermehr erfolgen wird. Wohl kommt es vor, daß ein Kranker nach dem Genuß der Kommunion besser wird. Aber das ist so zu erklären, daß durch diese Feier der Seelenzustand des Kranken sich beruhigt und dadurch die Wirkung der Arzenei unterstützt. Es ist ein ärztlich gern zugegebenes Faktum, daß seelische Zustände auf den Leib einwirken. Aber dieselbe Wirkung würde auch erreicht werden, wenn auf irgendeine andre Art der seelische Zustand des Patienten sich heben würde. Das darf aber nicht der Wirkung des Sakraments zugeschrieben werden. Wer zur Linderung körperlicher Uebel das Sakrament genießt oder es einem der Seinen angedeihen läßt, der versündigt sich damit gegen den Geist der Heiligen Schrift. Es ist nirgendwo gelehrt, daß das Sakrament irgendwelche leibliche Wirkung habe, haben solle, oder haben könne. Die tatsächliche Wirkung der beiden Sakramente, sowohl der Taufe wie des Abendmahls, auf den Empfänger ist rein geistlicher Art, aber darin auch unbedingt sicher und gewiß. Gott gibt, wir nehmen. Also das bißchen Wasser hilft nicht, das leibliche Essen und Trinken ist nichts nütze, wohl aber ist die Gnade Gottes im Sakrament eine lebendige und kräftige Quelle zur Seligkeit.

EDITORIALS

"THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE"

John 17, 21

"On a platform in Zion's Church in Cleveland one day last week (June 27), plump little Dr. Paul Press placed his small hand in the lean hand of sedate Dr. Henry Jacob Christman. They shook and in that shake was born a new U. S. sect." Thus recorded "Time" the historic event of the union of the Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States that took place before eight hundred delegates of the two churches on the 27th of June. We were all glad and not a little proud too, that for once the press of the country took notice of us in a prominent manner. We only regretted the closing word of that statement, for in that handshake was certainly not born a "new sect," but on the contrary, instead of two denominations we had one now and we had a right to feel that in this movement away from sectarianism we had passed an important milestone.

The secular press was also generally impressed with the fact that this merger had been effected without previously working out a complete constitution and a creedal basis. That both of this, and a great deal more, was left to the future and that it could be done without any serious disturbance of the denominationally minded, semeed to appeal to the general public as a decided divergence from what had been the ordinary practice in such cases. Of course, the broad-mindedness shown by the two Churches did not mean that they were indifferent to creedal requirements. The doctrinal paragraph contained in the "Plan of Union" says: "We acknowledge and accept the historical confessions of the two Churches as the doctrinal basis of union." So there will be a doctrinal basis, but the exact elaboration will come later. Both Churches continue to hold to the interpretation of the Bible teachings as contained in Luther's and the Heidelberg Catechism.

The name of the new Church, "The Evangelical and Reformed Church," is not especially satisfactory. Some have suggested the hyphen instead, which would make it the Evangelical-Reformed Church. This suggestion appealed to the writer, but a brother from a middle western state with whom he discussed it, was doubtful. He lives in a region where the Lutherans are strong. He told me that the Lutherans were taunting the Evangelicals out there with selling out to the Reformed. In adopting the hyphenated

form, the emphasis would be on the "Reformed" and the Evangelicals would find themselves deprived of their Lutheran heritage. That brother was afraid that we might lose some churches there in whom the Lutheran consciousness was still strong. We believe that this danger is not very great. But if we do lose a few it can't be helped. We can't unite with the Lutherans without interpreting the Lord's Supper in an unqualifiedly Lutheran interpretation. So we have to make our choice.

To us Evangelicals the union with the Reformed must appear as a historic justification of the principle on which our Church was founded. Our confessional paragraph furnished a creedal platform that was intended for Reformed as well as Lutherans. It was the intention of our fathers to plant an off-shoot of the tree under which the Church of the fatherland had found its place, in American soil. For many years our church leaders never even dreamed of approaching the Reformed with an invitation to unite. No wonder, for the Reformed Church had been here a hundred years longer. Now the divine providence that rules over human affairs has so shaped it that the Reformed were themselves ready for the step and made the first move towards it (if we are correctly informed that the late Dr. Vollmer was the agent of the first approach).

We—i.e. this writer—are not very well acquainted with the Reformed Church in the United States. Dr. Richards told us that they so far have no book telling about the inner development of the Reformed Church with any fulness. He said that he had read the book by the editor giving the "History of the Religious Life in the Evangelical Synod" and that he enjoyed it exceedingly not only on account of its fluent German style but also because of the orientation the reader finds in it on the "innern Werdegang" of the Synod. He said it would be a good idea, in his opinion, for the Reformed to write such a history for their Church and for the Evangelicals to compose such a history of the Synod in English. Not having such a book now, I have no clear picture of the leading events and movements in the Reformed Church. He had noticed the stress I laid in my book on the influence pietism had had in our early history. The Reformed, he said, had also had some experience with pietistic tendencies, but these circles had finally withdrawn from the main body.

The role of pietism in our history has been very important and, to my mind, wholly beneficial. The Synod can rightly be called a product of the more recent pietism that led to the founding of missionary institutions in various places. The Basel Mission House is the spiritual mother of the Synod. Its leading men like L. Nollau, Rieger, Garlichs etc., show in their life stories with their stress on conversion that they were true children of pietism. The lay

membership in our first period had come from regions where pietism was strong. To us these facts seem of high importance and we are thankful for them. Our own religious life was largely nurtured from these sources. We don't agree with Barth at all in his contemptuous treatment of pietism as though one could not lay hold of God by spiritual experience. We trust we shall find many in the Reformed Church who value spiritual and emotional experiences equally highly.

It is true the care of the inner life, the individual gospel, is not the only task of the church. The social application has to be added and has been added in the last twenty-five years. And there is a place for textual and historical criticism. Social justice and the penetration of the whole life are necessary to make the abounding promise of Christ available for all. But no one can please us who slights genuine pietism or thinks it has nothing to tell us any more and we hope that the united Church will have a place for it. With the late Dr. Theo. Braun, of Berlin, we are still of the opinion that the minister's conversion has a great and salutary effect on his pastoral work.

Conversion need not be the result of a crisis-experience. It ought to be the natural outcome of Christian training. But this training ought to be well directed and be given by a man of faith and prayer, for it is still true that religion can be more easily caught than taught. The Board of Education of the (former) Evangelical Synod has given intensive study to the problem of religious instruction of the confirmation classes, its objects and its methods. A perusal of its findings will be of great help to all who want to make confirmation more than a mere form. The (former) Reformed Church puts great emphasis on the work of the Sunday school, so we hear. Let us hope that the United Church will, by using the experiences and efforts of both (former) churches, succeed in enlisting the interest of the youth in the work of the church and developing the religious life of its young people to a far greater extent than has been the case in the past.

THE ECLIPSE OF PROTESTANTISM

The union of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America was felt to be an event of major significance by all of American Protestantism. The Protestant Church needed such a heart-warmer for there is little to boast of or to get enthusiastic about in the present situation.

1. There is one large and influenial communion in this country that calls itself the "Protestant Episcopal Church," but to a numerous and growing part of that Church the "Protestant" in

their name is a misnomer and an anathema. They repudiate it indignantly. They do not entirely reject the Reformation, but in their opinion Luther and the other Reformers should have cleansed the Church from within. By leaving the Church they divided the body of the Lord and introduced a subjectivism which in time led to numberless "sects" which all called themselves churches. The Church of England, according to them, is the only one which never lost the contact with the historic Catholic Church. By an unbroken apostolic succession can their claim to be a part of the real Christian Church be substantiated, and it is the great principle of "Anglo-Catholicism" to try to *recover the whole of their "Catholic heritage."* Apostolic succession, the threefold ministry (bishop, elder-priest and deacon) and the sacramental feature are not the only essentials of this Catholic heritage. In liturgy, vestments, kissing of the cross, procession, etc., they have already so much adopted of Catholicism that one visiting an Episcopal service of this type would not know whether he was in an Episcopal Church or a Roman Catholic one.

That Church has at one time made the claim that the Episcopals were the natural bridge towards an eventual union of the whole Church of Christ because they had both Protestant and Catholic features in their constitution. Since the development of the Anglo-Catholic movement and its daily growing strength, this hope seems to us to fade rapidly. We consider the Romanizing tendencies of this large body of Episcopalians one of the most discouraging features of the present situation.

2. With the second great disappointment we meet as we turn our gaze towards the land of our fathers, the motherland of the Protestant Reformation. Hitler has saved Germany, saved her from Communism—so say the Germans. Perhaps he has, but the price they and especially, the Church, have to pay for it is heavy. The ideals of the "totalitarian" state could not be applied to the life of the Church without disastrous consequences. It is true the early hope of uniting all Germans—as in one state so in one Church—had to be given up. But the hand of the state rests heavily on the Protestant Church. To be a member of the Church one must be a good "Nazi," not a good Christian in the old sense of the word. The emphasis on race, on "blood," so all-important in the life of the state, is not to be relinquished in the religious field. And what does not go with that in religion, in the Church, in the Bible, has to be cast overboard. A Reichsbishchof, invested with infallibility and clothed in dictatorial power, leaves no room for difference of opinion or freedom of action. The only way left to the conscientious pastor is that of the early Christian, martyrdom. All the former leaders have been suspended, pensioned off, shorn of influ-

ence, condemned to inactivity. Thousands have chosen to obey God rather than man. A glorious spectacle and one promising a better future, but at the present time the sky is dark.

3. In this country, life although hard enough does not carry the oppressive burdens of German existence. The Church is as free as ever. Still, the general mood is not one of optimism. Dr. Luccock has made a study of the post-war literature and gives his results in a remarkable book. He finds that the writers all suffer from a great disillusionment. The main cause was the World War, and it has hit, he says, the Protestant Church more than the Catholic. The Catholic Church took it as one of the great calamities like earthquake and pestilence that may come at any time, and busied itself caring for the individual souls of its communicants. Protestantism had become more and more the expression of a belief in the power of the gospel to transform human society. Then the War came and the fair dreams vanished. All the illusions faded and there was nothing left but a broken world, humanity not only physically wounded unto death but filled also with deadly hatred. Dr. Luccock shows how the literature of the period reflects the cynicism, loss of faith and even despair of the writers of contemporary prose and poetry. As the Church had been unable to prevent the War or even to keep the conflict within decent limits of estrangement, so it has not been able to revive again in the people their faith in the Church or in its gospel.

Of course the last years have seen the Church doing repentance in sack cloth and ashes on account of her War course, but the public may be forgiven if it refuses to believe in the genuineness of this repentance until the test of actual experience comes.

4. There are two essential interests that are vital to the strength of the historic church. It must be built on truth and must keep the unity of the spirit. Of the two, the Catholic Church has striven for unity, the Protestant Church lifts truth to the highest place. As a result, the Catholic Church has become one world-wide institution speaking with the voice of irresistible authority. Protestantism has not only produced national churches, but presents also the spectacle of hundreds of denominations in one and the same country. When the Catholic hierarchy speaks hundreds of millions listen. Only lately that body called to life the "League of Decency" and sent at once the fear of the Lord into the industry responsible for the salacious movie. The efforts of the Protestant Churches which had long been engaged in the same struggle, had been largely futile. We Protestants have come to see that the freedom of private opinion, so dear to Protestantism, has been carried to undue lengths. The pressure for a unifying of the divided forces of Protestantism is getting stronger every day. We seem to be a

long way from the goal. If we followed the lead of the Anglo-Catholics it would land us in time in the bosom of Romanism. But outside of the Episcopal Church, such a development is not one of the things to be feared. The principle that ought to lead us is the one many hundreds of years ago expressed by a great church leader and long a favorite in our Church: "In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas."

Dein Reich komme!

Die Reichsgottesidee nimmt eine zentrale Bedeutung in der Lehre Jesu ein. Er redet vom Reich Gottes hundertneun mal in den Synoptikern (bei Matthäus „Himmelreich," bei Markus und Lukas „Reich Gottes"). Er versteht darunter bald die inwendige Gottesherrschaft im Herzen der Gläubigen, bald das Kommen des Reiches Gottes in der Endzeit. Im Vaterunser macht er es zum Gegenstand des Gebetes der Gläubigen in der zweiten Bitte. Von dem sichtbaren Kommen des Herrn zur endgültigen (eschatologischen) Aufrichtung des Reiches Gottes redet das Neue Testament dreihundert mal. In vielen Stellen der Reden Jesu wird das Kommen des Reiches Gottes als bald bevorstehend geschildert. Auch Paulus hatte diese eschatologische Einstellung. Erst allmählich begann er mit einem „Verziehen" des Herrn zu rechnen.

In der Folge trat diese Erwartung im Bewußtsein der Christenheit zurück. Man fing an, in der kirchlichen Institution die vorläufige Verwirklichung dieser Hoffnung zu sehen. Doch in Zeiten der Krisis drang der alte Glaube immer wieder durch. Luther freute sich des baldigen Kommens des „lieben jüngsten Tages." Erst in der neueren Zeit verblich das Interesse an den „letzten Dingen." Eine jahrhunderte lange Entwicklung schien die Nutzolsigkeit des eschatologischen Wartens bestätigt zu haben. Die Kirche wandte sich vom Jenseits ab und beschäftigte sich mit dem Diesseits. Sie sah es als ihre Aufgabe an, das Reich Gottes auf dieser Erde aufzurichten. Die dritte Bitte schien diese Wendung zu rechtfertigen. Wenn der Wille Gottes auf Erden mehr und mehr geschah, so war dies das Kommen des Reiches Gottes. Dieser Wille Gottes sollte seine Erfüllung nicht nur im Gehorsam des Einzelnen finden, sondern auch in der gottgefälligen Einrichtung der menschlichen Gesellschaft. Das Christwerden des Einzelnen sollte gestützt werden durch die Verchristlichung des ganzen Lebens in allen seinen Beziehungen: das ist das Programm des „Social Gospel," und das war nach den Modernen auch das Programm Jesu, niedergelegt in der Bergpredigt, der „Magna Charta" seines Erlöserberufs.

In den letzten zwanzig Jahren ist aber wieder eine gewisse Rückläufigkeit wahrzunehmen. Die Liberalen meinten mit ihrer

Diesseitswendung sich auf Jesum berufen zu können. Da kam A. Schweitzer und unternahm es in seinem Buch „Auf der Suche nach dem historischen Jesus" zu zeigen, daß Jesus ganz und gar eschatologisch eingestellt sei. Seine gänzliche Interesselosigkeit an den Dingen dieser Welt — was wir Zivilisation nennen —, seine Gleichgültigkeit gegen eine Neuordnung der menschlichen Gesellschaft erkläre sich aus seinem Glauben an die unmittelbar bevorstehende Errichtung des Messiasreiches. Dieser Glaube gehört für uns zu den Dingen der Vergangenheit. Doch wir verehren in Jesu die Verkörperung des Geistes der Liebe. Wer in Wahrheit liebt, gehört zu ihm, denn das Sittliche ist das Wesen der Religion.

Ganz kürzlich lasen wir einen Aufsatz von Professor Stuber („Colgate-Rochester Divinity School"), dessen Verfasser noch weiter zu gehen scheint. Nach ihm erwartet Jesus das Ende innerhalb derselben Generation. Er hat gar nicht an eine organisierte Kirche gedacht, oder an eine Missionierung der Heidenwelt. Wir haben an ihm bloß den, der den Glauben an Gott und die Liebe zu den Menschen vorbildlich zu seinem Eigentum macht. Im Uebrigen müssen wir den Weg zum Heil selber finden, unser Neues Testament selber schreiben, ein Evangelium für eine neue Welt. Wir schauen voraus auf ein goldenes Zeitalter; in dem die Menschen sich freudig dem Reich Gottes unterwerfen und Friede und Freundschaft herrschen zwischen den Völkern.

Wie verschieden von diesen Träumen die Theologie eines Barth! Er setzt die Eschatologie wieder auf den Leuchter. Die totgeglaubte Lehre von den „Letzten Dingen" aufersteht zur Vor- und Alleinherrschaft. „Christentum, das nicht ganz und gar und restlos Eschatologie ist, hat mit Christus ganz und gar und restlos nichts zu tun." * Es geht um nichts anders als um die letzten Dinge (E. Brunner).

Das ganze Neue Testament ist endgeschichtlich orientiert. Die Eschatologie wird nunmehr statt eines Nachtrages nach dem Eigentlich-zu-Sagenden zum eigentlichen Thema selbst, zum maß- und zielgebenden Grunddatum. „Eine Bereitschaft für letzte Fragen und Antworten, ein Warten und Eilen letzten Entscheidungen entgegen, ein Lauschen auf den Ton der letzten Posaune — die von der Wahrheit Kunde gibt, die jenseits der Gräber ist: das ist die Gotteserkenntnis, die als Abschluß und Inbegriff des Alten Testaments im Neuen ans Licht tritt." Und das Heil ist **nahe**. Es ist in der Ewigkeit schon enthalten, und heranbrechend und immer näher kommend bedrängt es jeden unsrer Augenblicke, bereit zur Offenbarung in der letzten Zeit (1. Petri 1, 3—5): so „steht der Richter vor der Tür" (Jak. 5, 9).

* Siehe Petermanns Aufsatz in der Märznummer des „Theologischen Magazins" 1932, Seite 106 ff.

Klaffender könnte den Unterschied zwischen Barthischer und moderner Anschauung nicht wohl sichtbar gemacht werden. Wo nun stehen wir? Es liegt auf der Hand, daß wir fern sind von den optimistischen Träumen eines Stuber, das einem goldenen Zeitalter entgegensieht, durch menschliches Streben hervorgebracht. Seit dem Weltkrieg gehört eine solche Ansicht zum alten Eisen. Mit Barth erkennen wir in den letzten Dingen die Vollendung des christlichen Glaubens. Sie zum Grunddatum desselben zu machen ist eine Uebertreibung. Grunddatum ist das offenbarte und zugängliche Heil in Christo. Wir beschäftigen uns mit der Gegenwart hauptsächlich, mit der Zukunft erst in zweiter Linie.

Das Reich Gottes können wir selbst nicht bringen. Für dasselbe aber uns bereiten und andern dafür die Augen und das Interesse auftun, sollen wir, und können wir, denn Jesus selbst sagt, es gibt ein Reich Gottes in uns, und warum heißt er uns beten um das Kommen des Reiches Gottes?! Daß wir die eigentlichen letzten Dinge, Weltgericht, Auferweckung, Erneurung der Schöpfung nicht machen können, ist selbstverständlich. Zu gegebener Zeit von diesen Dingen zu reden, ist angemessen; sie in den Mittelpunkt der Verkündigung zu rücken, ist ein Unterfangen, das sich bald als unzulänglich herausstellt. Es würde zum Adventismus führen.

The Christian World

Is Liberalism Bankrupt?

It is the vogue just now to write the obituary of liberalism. What those who officiate at its funeral mean by liberalism is not always clear. The term is an elastic one and can be made to signify whatever the polemicist may at the moment desire it to mean. He is in an argument, or is descanting upon the failure of modern civilization and needs a foil, a whipping boy. Liberalism is close at hand and satisfies his need. So he thrusts at it as a raw recruit lunges at a dummy in bayonet practice. Liberalism is charged with all sorts of guilty responsibility for the chaos of the times. Politically, it is held to be the creator and supporter of capitalism, of *laissez faire*. Ethically, it is held accountable for the breakdown of social and private morality. Religiously, it is the *bete noir* of Barthianism, of Buchmanism, of Reinhold Niebuhr's radicalism, no less than of its traditional foe, fundamentalism.

The most important fact about the present mood is that it is liberals themselves who are most vehement in their denunciation of liberalism. They declare that liberalism in religion is superficial, romantic, sentimental, rationalistic, optimistic, unrealistic and futile, and that it is now disintegrating. It is being superseded, they say, by a form of thought that has depth, that is realistic, that deals with the facts of human nature and of society and of history without illusions. And when such realistic dealing with facts discovers to these liberals the persistent reality of human sin, the everlasting dependence of man upon a transcendent God, the necessity of revelation, and the validity of the doctrine of grace, they turn in disillusionment upon liberalism itself and denounce it for having denied them these "comfortable" articles of faith during the past generation. Perhaps it is inevitable that some liberals should react in this way, but those liberals who have clung throughout the years to these orthodox concepts, despite a temporary paucity of apologetic support, find it difficult to share in the penalizing of liberalism which is now the theological fashion.

The current tirade against liberalism is actuated by a misconception of liberalism. It is assumed that liberalism is a system, a thought structure, a more or less distinct body of doctrines, standing over against the subject matter of the older orthodoxy. If that is what liberalism is, it deserves the castigation which it is today receiving, for we have long passed the place where any body of doctrines can be set up as the final and adequate and absolute truth. But liberalism never made any such claim for itself. On the contrary, it distinctly repudiated such a claim and made that claim the object of its own attack upon orthodoxy. The difference between orthodoxy and liberalism was not a difference in doctrinal subject matter; it was (and is)

a difference in the method of arriving at true beliefs, and of changing one's beliefs. That method is the method of free inquiry, unencumbered by deference to certain static norms of truth which are held to be authoritative because they came into human history as a deposit from the outside. A man is not liberal because he believes certain things or disbelieves certain things. He is liberal if he follows the scriptural injunction to prove all things and hold fast that which is true and good.

The fundamentalist has no such misconception of liberalism. He sees clearly what it is, and opposes the method of liberalism just because it is at variance with his own method. His method starts with certain relatively fixed or "given" conceptions of the Bible, of Christ, of God, of man, of the primitive church, and behind them the fundamentalist will not go; they are sacrosanct; they are authoritative; they are God-given; they must not be made the subject-matter of free inquiry because free inquiry presupposes a possible explanation in accordance with the laws of historic continuity, or cause and effect, or social psychology, or others laws by which human reason deals with phenomena. The fundamentalist sees clearly that any concession to the method of liberalism imperils the kind of authority which is the basis of his entire system.

Liberalism arose in modern Christianity as the expression of revolt against authoritarianism. It was not an expression of a new body of doctrine or a revolt against the subject matter of orthodox doctrines as such. It presupposed no specific outcome as to particular beliefs; its faith was anchored in its *method*, which is conceived as no merely presumptuous human device but as the divinely ordained procedure by which God made it possible for man to attain knowledge and to grow therein. No doubt early liberalism unduly narrowed its method of inquiry, as the special sciences had done, and shut out from the field of its operation certain areas of reality, but it held within itself the corrective of its own error, as we now perceive. To demand that the application of the method of free inquiry should reach at once a final and adequate body of knowledge, and to condemn it because it did not do so, is unreasonable. It could not have done so. It began cautiously. Its results were at first scanty. As we look back to the opening decade of this century the theological system which liberalism was able to project seems thin and superficial, lacking in depth and in power. Much that present day anti-liberalism charges against it is justified, but the charge that liberalism itself is to blame is not justified.

The fact is that the faults of liberalism are the faults of its youth. It came upon a scene that was thickly overgrown with doctrines rooted in authoritarianism. The whole field had to be cleared. That is, every doctrine had to be challenged by the spirit of free inquiry and called upon to give an account of itself in terms of a continuous process of history. It could not be left standing on its unsupported claim to have come into history from the outside. If it came from outside it must bring proof of its claim which would satisfy the spirit of free inquiry in its most general and generous interpretation.

Following such a method, it was inevitable that the first effects of liberalism would be negative with respect to much of the subject matter of the Christian tradition. It was inevitable that it would frequently throw out the baby with the bath. Inevitable that it would attach too great importance to the first grains of truth which free inquiry was able to discover and authenticate; that it would invest its doctrine of evolution with undue optimism; that it would overlook great chunks of reality for which it could not at once find an explanation, and would even deny their reality. All this is freely conceded. Liberalism was young. It was trying to be honest, and its honesty was the honesty of all adolescence. But it was growing—that is the important fact which its critics ignore. Liberalism was not a static thing, not then, nor is it now. It still grows. It criticizes itself; it is dissatisfied with its past attainments; it pushes forward to new frontiers and downward to new depths of experience and reality. But its critics, in so far as they are effective critics, are able to see its faults because they are themselves liberals. They have no right to set up some other standard—call it "radicalism," or "neo-orthodoxy" or "realism" or what not—and as from a hostile camp throw bombs into the camp of liberalism. It is liberalism which has made "radicalism" and "neo-orthodoxy" and "realism" possible—they *are* liberalism in its present stage.

Therefore the current fad of talking about the bankruptcy of liberalism brings confusion into the thinking of our day. Probably Mr. Niebuhr is the most conspicuous offender among American writers in this respect. His use of liberalism as a whipping boy derogates from the effectiveness of his terrific attack upon the insufficiency of our Christian strategy in human society. For Mr. Niebuhr is himself a great liberal. He can talk all he pleases about being increasingly radical in social matters and increasingly conservative in religion, but he is unjust to himself when he dissociates himself from "the liberal viewpoint." What he calls his religious conservatism is in reality his true liberalism. He has reached certain convictions upon, let us say, sin and grace which he thinks are more akin to traditional orthodoxy than to the views of many liberals. But he has reached those convictions because he is himself a genuine liberal. He could not have reached them through authoritarianism—they would not be the same convictions had he not arrived at them through the method of free inquiry. It is unfair to kick down the ladder by which he has climbed to his present outlook. To do so is to play into the hands of reactionism and to create the illusion that, after all, authoritarian fundamentalism has the key to reality. It is unfair to fundamentalism so to deceive it, and it is a distinct disservice to all Christian endeavor. Mr. Niebuhr's discovery of sin and grace is not a reversion to the past; it is not a revival of authoritarianism; it is a positive achievement of liberalism and as such it marks a new advance for Christian thought and practice.

Especially in circles devoted to the theology of Karl Barth do we hear constantly about the bankruptcy of liberalism. Barth was at the

first himself an avowed liberal. He became dissatisfied with the content of liberal thought and found himself, as a pastor and preacher, emphasizing other elements of the Christian tradition, especially the majesty and transcendence of God, together with the method of God's operation in human experience through crises or catastrophes, and always on His own initiative as opposed to human seeking and human merit. We do not venture to suggest that Barth reached his position by the method of liberalism, but his followers are emphatic in their denial that he reached it by a revival of authoritarianism. He accepts the results of the higher criticism of the scriptures and of modern science in general. Barth's intellectual method (dialetic) is obscure, and to characterize it is not relevant to our present purpose. The point is that the Barthian movement takes delight in casting odium upon liberalism and pointing to its bankruptcy. Here, for example, is a newspaper dispatch from the Oberlin, Ohio, meeting of the Congregational-Christian National Council in session as these words are being written:

> The bankruptcy of liberalism in theology was pointed out in the seminar on current theological questions this morning as one cause of church attendance decline. This seminar is led by Dr. Douglas Horton, pastor of the United Church of Hyde Park, Chicago. Dr. Horton said that the theology of Karl Barth of Germany, "if liberalized, would make the faith of a modern man."

This is a particularly neat illustration of the point we are stressing, namely, that it is liberalism which decries liberalism. In the same breath liberalism is here declared bankrupt and Barthianism is hailed as the deliverer of the modern church, but Barthianism must be "liberalized"! Could any tribute to liberalism be more perfect?

What is meant by "liberalizing" Barthianism? We do not pretend to know what Dr. Horton meant (assuming, of course, that the dispatch accurately quotes him), but the only meaning which such words convey is that the method of reaching and supporting the Barthian position must be the method of liberalism, that is, the method of free inquiry. This is not the method which Barth himself now follows. He repudiates it vehemently. His method is highly rationalistic, subjective and non-scientific. That is to say, it is illiberal. His position is therefore essentially incommunicable to other minds. His disciples accept his position—as we suspect he himself does—more as a satisfaction of theological nostalgia than as a positive achievement of free inquiry.

But Barthianism must be liberalized, say its advocates, in order to be an acceptable faith. To which we agree. Liberalized by a bankrupt liberalism? No. It must be liberalized by submitting itself to the method of liberalism, which is the ineluctable spirit of free inquiry. Can this be done? One cannot know until one sets out anew on a realistic reexamination of the problem. Perhaps Professor Wieman has something to say to us on the point. He believes in God, and in a God who seems to act in much the same way that Barth's God acts. Indeed, if we take the two conceptions of God in terms of their actual

function in human life there is nothing—strictly, nothing—that Barth's God does with man and for man which Wieman's God does not do. Wieman's God, to put the matter roughly, is just as Calvinistic as is Barth's God. What then is the difference? The difference is that Wieman confesses that he arrives at his conception of God through the method of free inquiry, testing the validity of his conception and exploring the character and nature of God by means of this same method of observation and reasoning. That is to say, Wieman's God may be described as Barth's God liberalized—the conception of God desiderated by Dr. Horton and his seminar colleagues at Oberlin.

The Christian Century deplores partisan labels in religion, and consistently refuses to be an organ of any sect or school of thought. It takes no pride in being thought of as "progressive" in any sense which narrows its fellowship with all Christians or confines its influence to a mere party. It cherishes the principle of catholicity as a Christian virtue not to be violated or held lightly, and earnestly desires to exemplify it. Such limitations as may be put upon its exercise of this principle must be put on by others, not by The Christian Century. And we hold that the principle of liberalism, when rightly understood, is not a party slogan, but the only intellectual basis upon which an enduring catholicity may be erected.

At this moment of great confusion, of intellectual and moral bafflement and widespread despair, when men's hearts turn easily to many forms of magic and mysticism and subjectivity, seeking emotional rest, it is profoundly sad to find intellectual leaders who are the heirs of the liberal tradition and whose liberalism makes them the prophets they are, renouncing their spiritual mother and pouring odium upon her head. In this time, of all times, such men are called upon to rally their fellows with assurances that the liberalism which has opened our eyes to see the realities of modern civilization as no previous generation has discerned them, is also ordained of God as the best guide to point the way to that kingdom which, on the divine side, he is himself preparing for those who love him not only with all their heart, but with all their mind.

Christian Century.

The Merger Synod

This is one of the most significant months in the history of our denomination. When the next issue of the MESSENGER comes into the hands of our readers, the Reformed Church in the United States will have passed into history and a new denomination will have been born—a denomination which we hope will be greater and better than either of its constituent elements have ever been in all its glorious past. It is emphatically a time for much prayer, for serious thinking, for deepened consecration, for clear spiritual vision, and the determination to cultivate a double portion of earnestness, patience and good will.

It is not too much to say that the Reformed Church has never been provincial or parochial; it has had a reputation for broad-mindedness

and large-heartedness. From the days of Zwingli, the pastors and people of our Church have shown exceptional ability to "play the game" with the brethren of other communions, and there have been few evidences of narrow sectarianism to stain the record of the years.

Henceforth, however, we are to be subjected to a more severe test, and we have the confidence to believe that the spirit of brotherliness will continue to prevail. The merger which is scheduled to take place June 26-27 in Cleveland, Ohio, is assuredly a real adventure of faith. It is one of the finest illustrations of mutual confidence on the pages of Church history. We know no other instance in which two historic communions have come together in organic union before the adoption of a constitution and by-laws or agreement on a detailed creedal statement. For some years to come—we do not know how many—until a constitution shall finally be adopted, the fundamental law of the Evangelical and Reformed Church will be the Plan of Union, which has been almost unanimously adopted by the two fellowships. As all our people should become increasingly familiar with this brief but important document, we are publishing it again in this Merger Number. Every loyal member should study it carefully.

The thought has been expressed by some that the Commission on Union has planned everything in advance for the Cleveland meeting; that all the details have been "cut and dried"; and that the delegates to the new Synod will have little chance to be anything but "rubber stamps," practically compelled to ratify what has already been arranged. Such an idea, of course, is not really correct. Within the limits prescribed by the Plan of Union, the delegates will have full authority to take such action as will promote both the solidarity and the general welfare of the new denomination, and make it an increasing force for good in the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. They can elect as officers of the new Church whomsoever they may choose, and they have it within their power to lay far-reaching plans for the future.

One of the first duties undoubtedly will be to see to the appointment of a competent and representative Commission to prepare the constitution of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. When their work is submitted to a succeeding Synod it will have to be transmitted to the Classes and Districts for revision and adoption. How long all this will require depends in part on the frequency with which General Synod shall meet, and in part on "the will to agree" in finding a common ground that will reconcile past differences in operation.

Whether a Commission will also be appointed at this time to prepare a new Hymnal and Order of Worship for the united Church is a matter for the Synod at Cleveland to decide. Many inquiries have already reached this office, for example, as to the probable length of time that will be required to secure the adoption of a new Hymnal. A number of congregations have on hand many soiled books and they want to know whether they are justified in waiting for the new Hymnal to be issued by the united Church, or whether it would be wiser for them to secure additional copies of the present Hymnals. Our answer to that query is that even if a Commission is appointed now to prepare

the Hymnal and Service Book—and we are convinced such a Commission should be appointed—past experience would indicate that it may require no less than eight or ten years before such a book could be finally approved by the General Synod.

It would be timely also for the new Synod to take some forward-looking actions with reference to the great moral and social problems of this difficult time; but to what extent the Synod will be willing to give attention to such matters cannot be foreseen. It is highly probable that the present Boards of both communions will be encouraged and instructed to combine as soon as this can legally be done, with due regard to the large interests involved.

All in all, the few days spent in Cleveland should be intensely interesting and the actions there taken will surely be fraught with destiny. Shall we not all join fervently in the prayer that these deliberations may be so guided by the Holy Spirit that the will of God may be done and the cause of Christ truly advanced?

Reformed Church Messenger.

A Lutheran Liturgical Movement

By E. Sinclair Hertell

Member of the Editorial Staff of News-Week

Eight years ago a number of prominent clergymen and laymen of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church in this country organized the Liturgical Society of St. James. The purpose of this society is to stimulate interest in the study of Lutheran liturgics in their purest form and to seek to restore them to general use in the congregations in this country.

The society has been working quietly but effectively for these several years, and last September it held its first Liturgical Conference in the magnificent Trinity Lutheran Church, in Detroit. The conference was exceptionally well attended, and the lectures on liturgics were admirably illustrated by several services held in the church in which the members of the society participated. Choral Eucharist, Solemn Vespers, and some of the minor offices were all celebrated in the best Lutheran tradition that the people attending the conference could see the suggestions made in the lectures carried out in a practical manner. A similar conference will be held in Cleveland this spring. After its conference in Detroit the society published some of the lectures in the first issue of its official magazine, *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana.*[1] This issue gives a clear and painstaking picture of the aims of the society.

The Society of St. James proposed to restore to the Lutheran churches in this country the rites and ceremonies which were common in the Lutheran Church in the sixteenth century when they were in their purest forms. No attempt is being made to imitate either Anglo- or Roman Catholicism, and nothing is approved which has not the complete sanction of the best Lutheran tradition. Of course,

[1] Liturgical Society of St. James, 713 Garden Street, Hoboken, New Jersey.

Lutheran churches have always remained faithful to their doctrinal heritage. It is only in their liturgical practices that they have departed from the historic rites. It must also be remembered that not all Lutheran churches in America have fallen away, but I think it is equally true that the large majority of them have done so. Scandinavian Lutherans, both in Europe and in America, have retained far more fully the ceremonial of the sixteenth century. In New York, for example, there is a Swedish Lutheran church which announces a *Hoejmaessa*, or High Mass, and it is the custom among these people to say that their minister "masses" when he celebrates the Communion Office, a term, by the way, which I do not think has any parallel in either the Church of Rome or the Church of England.

But, aside from the Scandinavians, the Lutherans in America have become more and more careless about their ritual. As one of the speakers at Detroit said: "Two extremes are calling us: American sectarian worship, and the old-time liturgical Lutheranism of the sixteenth century. The former invites us to cast aside the distinctive forms of worship that have survived the great Liturgical deterioration of a century or so ago, and to accept an Americanized, Puritanico-subjective worship. The latter would tell us that we are conservative in doctrine; that we do not hesitate to hark back to Luther's day for purity of doctrine, so why not go back to the same age for liturgical purity?"

Martin Luther, a good deal of nonsense to the contrary, was no out-and-out Protestant when it came to matters of ritual. In this he differed from practically all other reformers. Luther said, in effect, that traditional forms of worship have a great value in them. If an abuse has crept in here and there it is easy to root out the abuse without throwing away the whole thing. Other reformers did not think this way. All rites and ceremonies to them were abominations and works of the devil because they were associated with the old order from which these reformers had revolted. Most of the reformers were destroyers; Luther was a purifier. Indeed, so fanatical were some of these men in their bitter hatred toward all liturgics that they have been well called *de*formers instead of *re*formers. All this is very important and should be kept in mind if the aims of the Society of St. James are to be seen in their proper historical perspective. Carlstadt and Zwilling threw all liturgics out of Wittenberg. When Luther returned to the city he restored a great deal that had been abandoned. The Mass was again celebrated properly, though of course it was purged of its objectionable characteristics. Elevation was again practised, and correct ceremonial once more was seen during the services. Even prayers for the dead were again recited, but no priest was allowed to accept any alms for the recitation of such prayers.

"Our fathers have laid the doctrinal foundation," said one of the essayists at the Detroit conference, "and have purged our Church of Roman and Reformed errors. It remains for us to take up the task of our forefathers and continue the work of purging Lutheranism of accretions that have attached themselves to it. Our forefathers brought

Lutheranism back to a conservative doctrinal basis. Our work is to bring her back to conservative forms of worship."

What, then, do the members of the Society of St. James wish to restore to the Lutheran worship in America? First, they desire a beautiful chancel and a rubrical altar. They do not want a Communion table, but an altar, because an altar stresses their doctrine of the Real Presence as against a theoretical presence. They want to see the altar adorned with a crucifix, candles, and flowers. Their taste in music is very conservative and may be said to be entirely Gregorian. They dislike "pretty pietistic German chants of the sixteenth century, and the Anglican barred 'singles' and 'doubles' " almost as much as they abhor "chromatic progressions" and the chants that "the basses and tenors love to sing." They wish to have the Holy Communion offered more frequently, though they are careful to add that it is a service which symbolizes God's gift to man and not man's offering to God. The first issue of *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana* lists the various types of Holy Communion services which are in the approved Lutheran tradition. It may be interesting to quote from one of these services, and I offer no excuse for quoting from the most elaborate one which is "Solemn Choral Eucharist or Solemn High Mass." This service "calls for Celebrant, Deacon, Sub-Deacon, Master of Ceremonies, two Acolytes, a Thurifer, a Book Boy, two to eight Torch Bearers and a full ceremonial. All parts of the service will be choral, and there will be lights and incense. The Celebrant and Deacon, at least, must be clergymen." The other services, which are fully discussed and described liturgically, are Matins and Vespers. Simple Matins is read; Choral Matins is sung.

Vespers, according to the best form, should be solemnly sung on Sundays and festivals. I may again quote for this service: "The office lights are used. The officiant may wear a cope. On festivals there may be four to six assistants acting as cantors. On ordinary Sundays the officiant and two assistants are all that are required. There will, in either case, be a Master of Ceremonies, a Thurifer, and two Acolytes. At the *Magnificat* the Torch Bearers will stand in line with the horns of the altar. Incense is always used at Solemn Vespers. The appointed psalms are always sung." The society urges the proper observance of the saints' days in the calendar, many of which are often ignored by the average Lutheran congregation. The historic vestments of the Mass are to be worn, as one may judge from the directions for the Solemn High Mass and Solemn Vespers, and the Choir and Acolytes are to be properly vested also. The processional crucifix is to be borne in procession, and the Crucifer is to be flanked by Torch Bearers. Surplice and stole are suggested to replace the customary black Geneva gown at Matins and Vespers.

Living Church.

The Council for Social Action

No action taken by any Council in recent years compares with the action of the Council at Oberlin, on the afternoon of Monday, June 25, in adopting by an almost unanimous vote the report of a

committee, which had labored indefatigably to draft a resolution that would be both adequate and acceptable in establishing a forward move, such as Dr. Holt had proposed, in the development of a *social department* that would make the social ministry of the Congregational and Christian churches a *major task* comparable to the organization and work of the *great missionary* and *benevolent societies.* By next week time will have afforded fuller opportunity to discuss the immense significance of this forward step. Meanwhile we present the text of the resolution setting up the Council for Social Action—a document so well and carefully drawn that it passed without the amendment of a single line.—*Editorial Note by Dr. Gilroy.*

Stirred by the deep need of humanity for justice, security, and spiritual freedom and growth, aware of the urgent demand within our churches for action to match our gospel, and clearly persuaded that the *Gospel of Jesus* can be the *solvent* of *social as of all other problems, we hereby vote:*

That the General Council create the *Council* for *Social Action* of the Congregational and Christian Churches of the United States of America.

That the purposes of this Council for Social Action shall be to help the churches to make the Christian gospel *more effective* in society, national and world-wide, through *research, education,* and *action,* in cooperation with the Home and Foreign Boards, Conferences and Associations, and local churches. It is proposed that the Council shall increasingly cooperate with the Federal Council of Churches in the creation of a program which shall be genuinely interdenominational. In its *research,* the Council will aim to be impartial, its only bias being that of the Christian view of life; its *educational* efforts will be directed primarily toward the local churches, but will also envisage the cultivation of public opinion; in *action,* the Council may, on occasion, intercede directly in specific situations.

That the membership of this Council shall be eighteen in number, to be elected by ballot in classes of six, one class to serve two years, a second class to serve four years, a third class to serve six years, and subsequent classes to be elected by ballot at the biennial meetings of the General Council for six-year terms.

That the eighteen members of the Council for Social Action shall be *ex-officio* members of the Commission on Missions, giving the Council for Social Action a standing similar to that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and of the Home Boards.

That pending the report of the Strategy Committee at the next meeting of the General Council, the Council for Social Action be financed through the budget of the Congregational Education Society, with the understanding that the Commission on Missions will allocate to the Congregational Education Society a percentage of apportionment funds which, including the $15,000 now appropriated for the work of the Department of Social Relations, is aimed to produce a total of

approximately $60,000 annually, this arrangement to take effect not later than Jan. 1, 1935.

That the Congregational Education Society be requested to consider the Council for Social Action as a close working partner in the common task of education on Christian social issues, the details of this cooperation to be worked out by consultation between the Congregational Education Society and the Council for Social Action.

That the work of the Commission on Race Relations, the Commission on International Relations, the Commission on Citizenship, and the Commission on Social Relations, be taken over as rapidly as possible by the Council for Social Action, with whatever adaptation in organization and personnel the Council for Social Action and these four Commissions shall mutually agree upon as best designed to promote the end thus served by these Commissions.

That in launching this Council for Social Action we envisage a new kind of churchmanship which, enlisting the volunteer services of a group of eighteen outstanding men and women of social vision, wisdom and Christian purpose, and commanding the services of five or six strong leaders in the fields of international relations, race relations, and economic statesmanship, will carry the campaign of education and action based on careful research out among our entire constituency at home and abroad. Believing that the Church will find itself as it loses itself in the struggle to achieve a warless, just, and brotherly world, we launch this venture, dedicating ourselves to unremitting work for a day in which all men find peace, security and abundant life.

By the Committee on the "Holt Proposal.
The Christian Leader.

The Church and Social Problems

In connection with the Northern Baptist Convention which met in May in Rochester, N. Y., one of the most eminent Baptists in the world, Hon. Charles Evans Hughes, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, sent a message which takes a position of such commanding importance that we feel it should be most carefully studied. It is as follows: "The Convention meets at a time when the thoughts of the people throughout the country are centered upon social and economic problems of grave importance. There is no lack of social and political agencies to deal with these questions, which inevitably give rise to serious controversies between different schools of political and economic thought. *I see no advantage to the Church in entering into the domain of these controversies. The Church has a far higher mission and cannot afford to impair its supremely important function of nourishing the spiritual forces of our people.* Behind all plans of social improvement, behind all disputes as to economic and political needs, and essential to real progress in the great enterprise of the Republic, is the sense of moral responsibility in the individual citizen. No scheme of laws can take the place of self-discipline and the culture of the spirit of man.

"The task of aiding in that discipline and culture must be performed in the atmosphere of liberty. With the expansion of knowledge, and with the unprecedented facilities for the spread of information, there is little prospect of success in the employment by the Church of mere authoritarian methods. The part of my ecclesiastical inheritance that I most prize, as a member of the great body which this Convention represents, is the tradition established by our forbears, despite severe persecution, of *religious liberty*—then their distinctive tenet, now an article of our national faith cherished by all our people. The zeal of those preeminent leaders found its motive power in their conception of the dignity, the inalienable right, and the responsibility of the individual soul. It is the mission of the Church constantly to vivify and re-enforce that conception, which is the essence of the teaching of the Master. In this way, there may be inculcated that spirit of reasonableness which makes keen the sense of fellowship and brotherhood, which underlies both domestic peace and international good will, and without which all devices for social betterment will be but mocking futilities. I trust that the Churches will realize that their highest privilege lies in this field of *spiritual culture*, making each religious assembly *a power-house for the diffusion of the currents of sympathy and understanding*. In this quiet but persistent endeavor, the Churches will justify themselves anew in a difficult age, and in a struggle with the forces of evil—a struggle not less keen because of the absence of intolerance and truculence—the victories of faith may again be won."

In the *Presbyterian Banner* of June 21, the venerable editor, Dr. James H. Snowden, writes in somewhat similar vein in discussing "The Socialist Party and Platform," saying that the Party is "all at sea" as to what should be done to reconstruct the social order according to their theory, and "they are not at all agreed as to what their theory is and what it requires." Dr. Snowden goes on to say: "The confusion of the Socialists serves to emphasize the unwisdom of those who want our religious bodies in their annual assemblies and conventions to discuss and adopt means and patterns of a better social order. Fault already is found in some quarters with the Northern Baptist Convention that it concerned and almost confined itself with petty matters of ecclesiastical policy and settled and said practically nothing about the confusion of the social order and the political world in general. Some liberal newspapers and critics treat these ecclesiastical meetings and programs with contempt and pour ridicule upon them. But when we look at the Socialist Party's meeting and outcome, or when we look at any political party with its platforms, or even at meetings of economists and industrialists and see how confused they are on these matters, we are thankful that these great religious gatherings *stick to their own proper business and programs, and keep out of the swamp and sea of settling the social order*. Jesus in all His teaching said little on these matters, and we do well to follow Him."

Is the position thus taken by Justice Hughes and *The Presbyterian Banner* the right attitude in a time of confusion like this? Should our religious leaders and assemblies steer clear of all controversial ques-

tions on matters of social justice? Do such questions not belong to the "proper business" of the Church? For the best answer of not over 300 words received by the Editor by Aug. 1, the MESSENGER will give a valuable prize. It is a question of such outstanding importance that we hope both ministers and laymen may participate in this discussion.

Reformed Church Messenger.

The Legion of Decency

BY HUMPHREY DESMOND

Editor of the (Roman) "Catholic Citizen"

The Legion of Decency crusade which the (Roman) Catholic Church under the guidance of the hierarchy has launched against indecency in motion pictures is the most thoroughly organized effort ever made to save the movies for the good, wholesome entertainment and educational advantages they should afford by ridding them of the salaciousness and vulgarity that has made them a grave menace to youth, to home life, to country, to good morals, and to religion. The crusade seeks to accomplish its purpose without harming the industry and without penalizing those producers who heed the warning and turn out clean pictures. It is directed solely against the producers and exhibitors of indecency, obscenity, and vulgarity who turn a deaf ear to protests.

"The only way to bring those who are responsible for the filthy flood that sweeps from Hollywood all over the country to their senses is to hit their pocketbooks," said the Most Rev. Michael Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore, in a recent address. That is the consensus of opinion of the Catholic hierarchy who have concluded after long and careful study that resolutions of protests which accomplish nothing must be replaced by action, action of heroic proportions running for an indefinite period, if indecency in motion pictures is to be stamped out.

The Legion of Decency crusade originated with and will be carried out under the direction of the entire Catholic hierarchy with the coöperation of 20,000 pastors and a laity numbering 20,000,000. It is proposed to have all Catholic adults and children join the Legion by signing a pledge wherein they promise to avoid indecent movies and persuade others to do likewise. There is nothing to prevent attendance at acceptable motion pictures and to aid in making proper selections lists of approved and condemned films are to be furnished through Catholic publications and societies.

Legion of Decency pledges have been distributed in about twenty or thirty dioceses thus far, but the number grows each week. Cleveland, Detroit, Albany, Omaha, Denver, and Los Angeles are a few of the dioceses in which action has started with pulpit addresses, talks to parochial school children, radio broadcasts, special society and fraternal meetings, Catholic periodical publicity, and the actual signing of pledges by thousands of individuals.

It is too early to point to definite results, but this much can be said: the crusade will have the support of numbers, it will be pursued

vigorously and wherever it is taken up, it will strike at box office receipts, the Achilles' heel of the motion picture producers.

Motion picture interests are, of course, seriously concerned over the movement. Last December, a few weeks after the annual meeting of the bishops, when this action was decided upon, Will Hays called a special meeting in New York which resulted in some improvement in newspaper advertising copy.

In April, delegates to the convention in Los Angeles of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America heard their president warn producers that unless indecency and vulgarity were eliminated, the entire industry would be hurt. He cited the Catholic crusade as evidence of what was in store.

A motion picture trade journal recently warned the producers that the Catholic campaign was of heroic size, and it could not be ignored.

An eastern Catholic paper reports that among the producers, Fox, Universal, Columbia, and R. K. O.-Radio are willing to fall in line with the suggested reforms. Paramount is considering, but Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Warner Brothers are thus far silent.

In Detroit, after the distribution of 2,000 pledges in a north side parish, the manager of a large neighborhood theater called on the pastor asking what he could or should do to improve film conditions. Leading Detroit dailies have given generous space to reports of the crusade and strong editorial endorsements to the campaign.

In Albany, when the crusade was launched, a letter was sent to all owners of theaters explaining the campaign and stating that there will be no let-up until permanent improvement is noted.

The movement has attracted widespread attention and coöperation not only from Catholics but from all who are interested in bettering motion pictures.

The entire Methodist Episcopal Church of the San Francisco area, consisting of 742 congregations in California, Arizona, Nevada, and Hawaii, has taken action to coöperate with Catholic organizations engaged in this crusade. The action followed decision of seventy Methodist congregations of the Fresno-Glendale district to take part in the campaign.

A thousand Jewish women joined the Legion of Decency in Denver when the campaign was launched there.

Representatives of Methodists and Baptists in Galveston, Texas, are reported to have joined the campaign, and Jewish leaders in New York and elsewhere have commended it.

The Detroit Council of Churches, which represents eighteen Protestant denominations with a membership of approximately 250,000, has sent a request to all ministers asking that "appropriate consideration" be given to the Legion of Decency and that they urge their parishioners to sign the pledge of the Legion.

Without question the crusade has gotten off to a flying start. The measure of its success will be determined by the number who sign the Legion of Decency pledge and live up to it after they have signed it.

Living Church.

A Notable Stand

In his "penitent reparation" to the Unknown Soldier, the Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, of Riverside Church, New York City, has undoubtedly "gone the whole way" in his renunciation of war. Remembering what he said on the occasion of the last world conflict and also what he did in France during the World War, he declared that he will never again, directly or indirectly, sanction another war, and added solemnly, "I'll see you in prison first." Dr. Fosdick's words deserve to be recorded and remembered. They are as follows: "I renounce war because of what it does to our men. I've seen it. I renounce it because of what it forces us to do to the enemy. I renounce it and will not sanction it because of its consequences and the undying hatred it nourishes. I renounce it and never again will I be in another war. I stimulated raiding parties to their murderous tasks. Do you see why I want to make it personal? I lied to the Unknown Soldier about a possible good consequence of the war. There are times I don't want to believe in immortality—the times I want to think that the Unknown Soldier never can realize how fruitless was his effort. The support I gave to war is a deep condemnation upon my soul. . . . The noblest qualities of human life, which could make earth a heaven, make it, in war, a hell. *Men cannot have Christ and war at the same time.* I renounce war."

Book Review

Reviews when not signed are by the Editor.

NOTE: When ordering books, please mention MAGAZINE.

The Finality of Jesus Christ, by *Robert E. Speer.* Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1933. 386 pages, $3.00.

The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry whose results were published in the book entitled "Rethinking Missions," two years ago, aroused a good deal of discussion. Theologically it took an attitude of advanced liberalism. Formerly, it said, the missionaries went out to save the heathen from hellfire; today they go to offer the "abundant life." To our forefathers the non-Christian religions were false; to us they are "inadequate." While the old missionaries tried to convert the heathen to Christianity, we now are ready, *in conjunction with other religionists,* to fight atheism and secularism. "The coming world religion is the New Testament of every faith."

The reception this new view of missions found varied according to the viewpoint of the individual. The Lutherans, of course, rejected it utterly. Of the churches of English and American extraction, the Presbyterians spoke with equal vehemence. Their spokesman may be said to have been Dr. Robert Speer. In the book before us he has now givn not so much his own opinion on the matter, but rather a compact record of what the Church of the ages has thought about it, what view of Christianity and of Christ she has held and what was her attitude toward the non-Christian religions, at all times. This historical survey seems to us unanswerable. Speer makes it as clear as the day that Christian missions have at all times represented the faith that Christ, the Son of God, is the Savior of mankind and that all knees will ultimately bow to him. There is not a man in this country, we believe, who knows so much about foreign missions as does Dr. Speer. He quotes an overwhelming amount of authorities and the reader will be equally impressed with the tireless industry that enabled him to bring all these witnesses together, as with the unanimity of their testimony.

In the first chapter Speer seeks to show that the entire faith of the first two Christian centuries represents Jesus as unique and final, the Savior, Son of God, God. Those who today deny the divinity of Christ, he says, must seek him outside the entire evangelical literature. It is wrong to claim that Paul changed the conception of Christ; primitive Christianity held the same view on his person. Those who say that the Church should return from the "Gospel of Christ" to the more pure and primitive "Religion of Jesus," have absolutely no footing in the New Testament record nor in the writings of the early Fathers. The primitive Christian estimate of Jesus was unmistakably

revealed in the early Christian custom of prayer to Jesus, in their view of his death and resurrection.

Owing to this view of Christ the attitude of the early Church to other religions was utterly exclusive. Christianity indeed originated in the Jewish Church. But all it had in common with Judaism was outweighed by its radical and fundamental difference. It superseded and transcended Judaism. In the Church's relation to heathen religions there is not a trace of syncretism, or of a "fellowship of faiths," of "parliaments of religion," or "conferences of religions." Origen admires Plato, but Jesus is not equated by him with other faiths. Platonism, or Gnosticism received no support from the Church of the first two centuries. Why did Christianity win in that period? Because it was not syncretistic, was distinctive and superior, had broken with the world, it had *the* truth about God, man and life.

In chapter III, which deals with the whole sweep of the missionary movement, the writer now documents the fact that the same view of Christ and the same non-syncretistic attitude towards non-Christian religions generated and sustained the expansion of Christianity. This chapter especially brings out the author's minute acquaintance with the history of foreign missions. He quotes Harnack, who says in his "Expansion of Christianity," that "there were no precedents or analogies or parallels for Christ. He was original and unpaired. Christianity made no terms with polytheism at any point." And then Speer goes on to prove this historically. Beginning with Ulfilas and St. Patrick, he touches on all the leading missionary characters and periods: Boniface, Francis of Assisi, Raymond Lull, Marco Polo. Some may have made compromises on certain customs with heathenism, but with the sole aim of absorbing all in Christ. The policy of amalgamation always proved its own folly. Its success was only superficial and shortlived. We look into the lives of Schwartz, Carey, Martyn, Alex. Duff. "The idea of continued 'conquest' is fundamental in missions to heathens," he says.

There is no hope in Hinduism, no God in Confucianism. Japanese leaders themselves say that Western scholars put too much stress on the resemblance of Christianity to non-Christian religions.

Finally we are ready for the question, "Can we still hold the primitive view of Christ and what attitude should we take toward non-Christian religions today?" The first part of the question must be answered with yea, emphatically. All of Christianity depends on Christ. In him we have what no other religion has. A Jewish Rabbi (Freehof, of Chicago) says himself: "He is still the comrade of countless lives. No Moslem ever sings, 'Mohammed, lover of my soul', nor does any Jew say of Moses, the Teacher, 'I need thee every hour.'" Abundant tributes are offered on Christ's unique personality, his deity, his incarnation, atonement, and resurrection, culminating in the result that the essential Christ is the historic Jesus, that Jesus is incomparably greater than all others, that in him the supernatural is rational. Jesus is not only an ideal to aspire to; he has cosmic significance. To the believer he and God become one single thought. It is easier

to believe that the evangelists described a fact than that they invented a myth.

How, then shall we approach other religions? The Christian religion is not a racial religion. The others have to make racial contributions (subtlety, sense of law, clarity, depth), not religion. There is not a single element of truth in other religions that is not in the Christian. International conferences on religion, as a rule, today do not recommend controversy, but they furnish not a syllable of support to the idea that those religions were adequate. Use, they say, those fragments of religious truth in other religions as helps to preach the gospel with power and success. Bishop Thoburn, to quote one of the many voices, says, "quit controversy and preach the gospel. Keep your temper but don't avoid plain issues."

The attitude towards other religions varies naturally according to a man's personality and theological position. Parliaments of religion are considered helpful by some; others consider them as harmful, claiming that e. g. the antagonism of heathen leaders and their religious pride became more pronounced after that Chicago parliament.

Should we unite with other faiths in fighting secularism? Hardly, for those Asiatic defenders of secularism, in India e. g., are more akin to the Christian in spirit and program than the forces of organized religion. Many of the finest spirits in India have been driven into secularism by the abuses of their religion.

Do the heathen religions prepare for Christ? They do not, they are all developments in the wrong direction.

Some writers urge that Christ's word about "fulfilling" the law should be more stressed than the desire to destroy. Answer: there is still plenty in heathenism that needs to be destroyed, more of that than what ought to find fulfillment. The "sharing" likewise, demanded by some, is not to be understood as though the heathen could give us what is not in Christianity. But the Church of the East as well as of the West ought to share the riches that are in Christ.

"On Jesus, the rock, the Son of God, the Redeemer, the Church has stood all through the ages," says Speer in closing. "Here it must continue to stand. From this foundation the Church, so long as it is true to its message and its mission, whether at home or abroad, will never remove."

The book is to be highly recommended, not only on account of its stand by the old gospel, but on account of the rich treasures of missionary literature all through the centuries it makes accessible to us. Having the experience of missionary leaders of many generations at his fingers' ends, Speer speaks as one having authority.

The Church Looks Ahead. American Protestant Christianity. An Analysis and a Forecast. Edited by *Charles E. Schofield*, New York, The Macmillan Company. 1933, 400 pages.

In this book twenty-one contributors look at the Church from various angles, analyze the difficulties it has to contend with and aim

to show the way they may be surmounted. The contributions are subsumed under three heads: 1. the Mission of the Christian Movement, 2. the Message of the Gospel, 3. the Method of Organized Christianity. In an introductory chapter by the Editor (he is superintendent of a district of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Colorado) we get a very adequate description of the present situation. It is a new world we are living in. The acids of modernity have eaten away in many the old faith. When the conclusions of science, even, are only tentative, how could those of religion be absolute and unchangeable? Religion has failed to cope successfully with the evils that have come from the industrialization of society. Can a faith that originated in an agricultural society be an adequate guide in the complex society of today? The failure of Christianity in the World War has tended to increase the doubt of the validity of its claims and the practicability of its program.

The first article of the first part of the book is on "the Sacraments," by Dr. Joseph M. M. Gray, Methodist minister of Detroit. Dr. Gray is not in favor of the increased emphasis on the sacraments in many churches. It is true, he says, that the sacrament of the altar symbolizes the "presence of Christ" and many do this so successfully that this presence becomes a fact of experience. But this presence is not a material (or spiritual fact) independent from the faith of the recipient. And it is not a real presence simply because Jesus instituted it. In fact, it is rather doubtful whether Jesus did so institute it. That "this do in remembrance of me" is from Paul. And the "breaking of bread" as a regular feature of the church life (in Acts II) doesn't mention the wine. Again, baptism was not instituted by Christ, but by John the Baptist. Jesus acquiesced in it. He certainly did not ordain it as a sacrament. The so-called "Great Commission" (Matt. 28: 18-20) is a later addition. Such deeply spiritual sects as the Quakers or vigorously active groups as the Salvation Army do not use the sacraments.

It was certainly shocking that the World Conference on Faith and Order found it impossible to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. The meal that was to symbolize the unity of Christ's Church was the reason of its breaking apart. The writer does not look with favor on the trend even in the Methodist Church of putting an altar in place of a "table" in the center of the church.

A similar attitude is held by the next writer, Dr. Cole, Methodist minister of Brooklyn, in "Modern Preaching and Worship." The sacramental view, he says, is to make religion God-centered, instead of man-centered. But does sacred material reveal God better than dedicated personality? Preaching is truth and worship and divine revelation through personality. A Methodist church with altar and ritual is to the writer a call backward, a discounting of J. Wesley's departure from the cathedral. The sermon ought to be the climax of the service, everything else should create the atmosphere for the sermon.

Dr. Diffendorfer (Secretary of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Church) reports on the Christian Missionary Enterprise. He is heart-

ily in favor of most of what was said in "Rethinking Missions." To him it would be erroneous to maintain an attitude of hostility to non-Christian faiths. Build, he says, on whatever is good in other faiths. The missionary is to become more and more an adviser rather than a leader. He goes no longer to the "heathen." He sees his main enemy in secularism and ought to be willing to cooperate with other religions against this. He ought to stand for a gospel of brotherliness, in contrast to one of exclusiveness and hate.

Dr. Calkins of the first Congregation Church of Cambridge, Mass. has a fine chapter (the first in the second part of the book) on "Personal Religion." He discovers a very strong trend towards religion in many quarters. The very irreligiousness of modern life has made religion more important to many. "The pace of life has proved too much for the peace of life." There is a striking development of real religion among college youth, he says. Scientific materialism has made for the rebirth of personal religion. The nervously unbalanced are in need of a reorganization of the self and religion is best able to give it. Upon the discovery of an adequate personal religion depends the solution of all other affairs. Our concern is not as to the reality of the historic Christ, or on points of ecclesiasticism and denominationalism. Nor is it in theology although no religion can long endure which does not rest on a thoroughgoing intellectual foundation. But people want to get at the Reality behind religion. They want to know Christ as Paul knew him and experience him as the "power to become children of God." The Church must be organized to meet the demand for inward spiritual certainty and for the possession of inward personal power.

Other articles in the second part of the book are on Christian Ethics, on the Social Gospel, on Internationalism. One that especially appealed to us was on "The Contemporary Note in Theology," by Dr. Edwin Louis of Drew University. Formerly theology depended on revelation, tradition, authority. Still, almost from the beginning Christian teachers were alive to the age in which they lived. They aimed to find in contemporary thought new ways of making intelligible accepted Christian belief. They could not use categories of a later age. Andrew White in his "Warfare of Science with Theology" blames theology for not using knowledge and thought forms of the nineteenth century in medieval and early Protestant periods; or for fighting evolution and later surrendering to it when that was the only way out. It must be admitted that Christian theology was always eager to preserve the old. Nevertheless it has shown a remarkable ability to adjust itself to a changing intellectual outlook without sacrificing its treasures of truth to a materialistic philosophy.

At any rate, today theology works hand in hand with the most exacting biblical scholarship. Christianity responded more readily to science and biblical criticism than to the claims of the social movement. The theologians were too closely articulated with the status quo. Nevertheless when Christ was summing up everything under love of

God and man, we are finding today that he was dealing with fundamental realities.

The battle with psychology is still on. We are benefiting from it in the field of education. We are confident, however, that the attempts of some psychologists to dissolve the objects of religion into mere subjective fantasies will never succeed.

In the third part of the book such matters as Religious Journalism, the Church College, the Country Church, the Church in the City, the Movement toward Unity are discussed.

The book is a mine of valuable information on many fields of Christian thought and activity. Wherever we tested it we found it interesting and helpful. One naturally cannot always go with a writer the whole way. But without a question the many subjects in the volume have all been discussed by men who were experts in the particular field which they cover.

The Making of the Modern Jew, by *Milton Steinberg.* The Bobbs Merrill Co., Indianapolis. 1933 & 1934, 317 pages.

The anti-Semitism of Hitler has made the Jewish question a live issue again. Outside of Germany he has found hardly any support for his treatment of the Jews. Germany needs friends badly in her struggle for equality among the nations and he has estranged millions who might otherwise be her friends. His policy has also wrought havoc among the Jews. In Germany the process of assimilation had gone further than in any other country and now the Jews are made to feel that this one way of solving the Jewish question is no solution at all. Can, then, the problem be solved at all? Will the Jew always remain an alien and an outlaw, and what were the reasons that made him such a stumbling block to the Gentile mind? These and similar questions are discussed in this book by a member of the Jewish race. The author speaks out of a fulness of information about the subject, and while we may not agree with all his judgments, he makes it very clear that the Jew became what he is today as a result of his history, that the nations of the world are largely to blame for the things they don't like and can't understand about him.

The Jews, he says, today are in a state of confusion. Some are resentful of their Jewish descent and some are sentimental about it. Some are modern and disregard the Sabbath and some observe it with the strictness of the past. Some are for assimilation and some are for the preservation of their identity. Some are reformed Jews and some orthodox. The average Jew stands between two groups and does not know which way to turn. If we want to understand the character of the contemporary Jew we first have to understand the mystery of the survival of the Jew. To the Christian the tragedy of the Jew finds its source in their rejection of Christ. The Jew himself explains it as a punishment for his breaking of the law.

After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the Jews created a bond of cohesion for themselves in the law, the Torah, whose

main portion was the Pentateuch. Around this they erected a "fence," consisting in a ritual, a code and ways of living which were to protect its moral content. Since to their mind the whole law was divine, it was infallible and immutable; the only way in which its teachers could be original was by writing commentaries on it.

In Spain only, under the protection of the Moslem, did the Jews keep pace with the progress of the Western mind. For them the dark ages began with their expulsion from that country in 1492. "But through all the changes of their history, the Jews maintained, enriched and handed on a great culture." (Reviewer lets this judgment stand although to him this culture does not seem rich nor great.) Next to the Old Testament the Talmud was the chief book to be studied (there are a number of Talmuds, the Babylonian Talmud alone numbers eighteen volumes!). In the productions of commentaries, the subtlety of the teacher often performed the most unexpected stunts, with little benefit to real religion, we think. Still, the tradition, thus developed, guaranteed homogeneity in thought and action to all Jewry.

The Jews believed that they were the chosen people, the favorite children of God. Why, then, had they to suffer so much? First, because they were themselves sinful, had broken the law. Then, through suffering comes betterment. Finally, they carried the burden of their people gladly for they were awaiting the triumph.

The bond of Jewish unity, if we are to sum up, lay in a social pattern, an ethical code and an historic loyalty.

To the outside world it might seem little that the Jews had really only the Talmud and their commentaries. But there were no other objectives among men for the Jew, no other worlds to conquer. He found them in the realm of books and ideas. They worshiped study and scholarship. From his "Jeshivas" (academies) has come a reverence for brilliance and acumen, an insistence upon education, a tendency towards the intellectualism so prevalent among Jews.

All this separateness of Jewish life, this isolation from all influences of the non-Jewish world, came to them not as a matter of choice. It was forced on them by the nations themselves. By oppression and persecution they tried to exterminate them; and when this proved impossible they shut them up in Ghettos (and in the "Pale," the districts in Russia in which they were compelled, or allowed, to live).

As was said above, when the Jews were expelled from Spain darkness settled upon them, their mental life was dissipated, they could only vegetate from now on.

It was hundreds of years later that a great new hope seemed to dawn for Israel. Rationalism ruled in the European world. The age of tolerance made its appearance. Lessing, great friend of the Jews, wrote his "Nathan der Weise." A Jew is the chief character of the drama. The French revolution proclaimed the Jews' emancipation. The "Code Napoleon" introduced it in the lands the great warrior had conquered. It took a long time till the promise of equality before the law was granted everywhere. What was the Jew to do now? In Germany hundreds of thousands availed themselves of the new privileges.

They accepted baptism, or, at least, shed their Jewish ways of living. And now, in 1933-34, Hitler is "turning the clock back."

In the closing chapters the author tries to answer the question as to what course the modern Jew is to pursue. The Reformed Jew, especially strong in America, takes the position that Judaism is a religion. This religion is to be brought up to the standards of modern scholarship, so that between it and e. g. Unitarianism there would be little difference. The old ritual and folkways are to be given up. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are determined to stay put. But how can you expect the young people of America to accept the traditions of a hoary past and an outmoded type of theology?

The author takes a middle course. Judaism is not only a religion. It is also a civilization, a particular culture. In some way this culture, perhaps modernized, is to be maintained. The new hope of Zionism, to find in Jerusalem a place for the study of Hebrew and the rejuvenating of an ancient civilization, may point the way. He is not sure whether assimilation may not after all become again a possibility. But under present circumstances this seems remote. So let us wait and see what Jerusalem can do for the Jew.

We don't think that the study of Hebrew and the Jewish past will solve their difficulties. To us it seems that the New Testament gives the key to the understanding of the Jewish problems. They have "not understood the day of their visitation." They rejected the gospel of Israel's greatest son. They went their own ways, and the hostility of the Christian world confirmed them in their attitude of denial and shut them up in their narrow Jewish seclusion. The Christians have made it hard for them to see their past in this light. We shall have to wait until the Hitlerites and other enemies of the Jews relent. Then assimilation will be more likely to commend itself.

At any rate, the book before us enables us most convincingly to understand the position of the modern Jew, to see that the developments of two millennia have created the modern Jew, his difficulties, his hardships, his uncertainties. It is written in a beautiful style of exceeding clarity, a most estimable product of contemporary scholarship working on an acute problem.

The Process of Religion. Essays in honor of *Dean Shailer Mathews.* Edited by *Miles H. Krumbine.* New York, The Macmillan Co. 1933. 266 pages.

Professor Shailer Mathews, for many years Dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, celebrated his seventieth birthday a year ago. Dr. Krumbine (now pastor of a community church in a suburb of Cleveland) got together a number of contributions from friends and colleagues of Dr. Mathews as a kind of birthday present and presents them in this volume. A brief biographical sketch of the Dean, given by his son, precedes the essays of the different writers. Then the series opens with an article by Professor Aubrey on Dr. Mathew's theological position. The dean is not a dogmatic theologian

at all. He always approached religion and theology from the historical and sociological angle, never from the speculative. Religion is to him "a process, not a system of doctrine," as he frequently puts it. On hearing this definition the first time, it may sound absurd; but not wanting to quibble about words, we understand that he means there is development in religion and theology. Moral and religious conceptions change and grow. Believing people, or churches, express their beliefs in creeds. These creeds have the function to clarify the beliefs and to rationalize them to the ones who hold them. But they are never final or of ultimate authority. Time and again as the needs and knowledge of people change, they feel the need of revision. Again, in expressing religious beliefs, it is necessary to use pictorial representations. These pictures are drawn from the life and environment in which people live. If the environment changes essentially, the conceptions of religious things will be modified also. Mathews likes to say that the religious teacher takes his "pattern" (his thought-forms) from the world in which he lives. Saying, God is a father, a king, a judge, means to apply the relations of our human world to cosmic situations. Such pictorial language is always imperfect, it is analogical, not final or absolute.

These considerations also apply to our faith in Jesus. The central thought of Christianity is that God can be met through Jesus. But this represents our attitude, it is not a doctrinal statement. To confess the deity of Christ is to adopt his attitude towards life, not to subscribe to a system. Loyalty to the Savior and to a group which has similar loyalties is the distinguishing attitude of Christians.

According to Mathews we have outgrown many of the old conceptions (the beliefs have changed with the "patterns" found in the present-day world). He sacrifices the stability prized by the conservative to the ready adjustment wanted by the progressive. Doubtless there has been change in the theological and religious world. Mathews thinks if we only stay loyal to Jesus all will be well. That term is however, too vague to give a satisfactory indication of what Jesus is to the Christian and what he will remain in the future.

Shirley Jackson Case, in an article entitled "Whither Historicism in Theology", agrees with Mathews as to creeds and their meaning. They have only a functional value, he says, to express to an age its own conviction. Christian doctrines are not absolute entities but current opinions held by the people at a certain time. They contain what "seems vital at the moment."

One may put over against this the fact that most churches of Protestantism and all of Catholicism recite in solemn concord the Apostles' Creed going back almost to the Church's infancy.

Justin W. Nixon (of Rochester) dwells on the Confusion in present-day Protestantism. Shall we relieve the tension by separating according to our conservative or liberal views? No, he says, let us stay together. Don't urge church union too much either. Let individuals and groups find new light and blaze the trail. Then let the Church as an institution follow the trail, not blaze the trail herself.

D. Clyde MacIntosh, Professor of Theology at Yale, strikes a somewhat different note from the others. He surveys the revival movements of past centuries, down to Edwards' time. We haven't the theology of Edwards anymore, or of strict Calvinism. Still he thinks that personal evangelism and the stress on conversion ought to play an important role in the life of the Church.

D. A. McGregor, of the Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., has a valuable paper on the "Social and the Individual in Religion." He thinks the Christian is a social being first and foremost, and blames W. James that he forgets the social emphasis in his "Varieties of Religious Experience." To James, Christianity seems to be the religious awakening only, the turning of the sinner to God in repentance and faith. McGregor claims that only a few have such experiences, and the ordinary minister is—and ought to be—satisfied if his people are honest, go to church and lead a decent life. It stands to reason that a church with a background of pietism would rather side with James than with McGregor on this point. Nevertheless Whitehead's definition that "religion is what a man does with his solitariness," is obviously one-sided.

Richard M. Vaughan writes on the "Plight of Mechanism." He says it is an exploded world view: it cannot explain the origin of life; the rational order of the world; the fact that there are spiritual values; the dynamic theory of matter; the further fact that we live in a universe plastic to divine purpose, etc.

The last contribution is by A. Eustace Haydon, professor of Comparative Religion, University of Chicago, on "the Renaissance of Religion." Mr. Haydon is a humanist, an agnostic, an atheist. He reckons with the death of the old religions that are built on faith in God. The new religion will build on man's own resources only, in close cooperation with science. There is no certainty as to the result, but why not cling to the illusion, if it is an illusion, that man will one day build the world after his heart's desire.

An interesting book with many valuable contributions. If Dr. Krumbine had finished the book with an article of his own instead of the one by Haydon, the final note would have been more satisfactory.

Facing Our Day, by *William Chalmers Covert.* The Abingdon Press, New York, 1934. 183 pages, $1.50.

Dr. Covert, for ten years Executive Secretary of the Board of Religious Education of the Presbyterian Church, was elected Moderator of that body by this year's General Assembly (meeting at Cleveland). He is a man of nearly seventy, but, as he said recently, has lived with the young people of the Church and tried to keep young. He is a dyed-in-the-wool optimist. Even on the question of the alleged moral slump of the younger generation, he begs to differ from the general opinion; he believes the young people of today are more sincere, realistic and healthy than we were in our day. One may disagree with

him but his optimistic attitude is very pronounced in this volume of eleven essays.

He begins with the matter of religious education, with which he has had an acquaintance of so many years. The Church has always taken a paramount interest in higher education. Of the one hundred and nineteen colleges first founded east of the Mississippi, one hundred and four were church colleges, and the men trained in these colleges have been a source of strength to the Church and the world. Today, in an age of materialism, brought on by the results of applied science, some have lost their faith in the things of the spirit. Professor Otto says, "The more consistently theism is adhered to, the more completely is the work-a-day world surrendered to interests which subvert the most precious values, and the more blind is man's participation in the working out of his own destiny." But on the other hand, it ought to be well pondered what Rufus M. Jones says, "The main trouble is that while the pillar thinkers of the world have seen and announced the bankruptcy of materialism, there are hosts of lesser men who go on retailing materialistic theories of the universe to their students and leaving them stranded on the windy waste of speculation."

The preacher of today, of course, must know the minds and needs of his people. While he cannot be expected to be a scientist, he must be able to prove the reasonableness of his Christian faith. And while he ought to be familiar with the technique of modern education, still more he ought to be able to pour the rich redemptive content of his message into his methods.

Covert has an illuminating essay on modern psychology. The method, he says, of handing to the child without regard to his intellectual experience or moral needs the miscellaneous facts of life, was discredited many years ago. He makes the somewhat startling statement that "through the deeper introspections of psychology sin rises out of the innermost substance of our being more brutish and venomous, more subtle, persistent and invincible than ever. We are more totally depraved than John Calvin thought. Never were Christ's cross and the redemption program of the Christian religion so urgently needed as since psychology has explained the subconscious."

He has an impressive chapter on our Era of Leisure. He calls attention not only to the enforced leisure of the unemployed but also to the pathetic incapacity of the American business man to use his leisure with any satisfaction to his higher self, and lays his finger on the fact that here the Church has a problem it has done very little to solve.

There are essays on the age being a "Period of Books," a "Time of Newspapers"; on "the Vogue of Religious Cults," on "Faith Healing," on "Spiritual Hunger and Expectancy," and other subjects. A rich book, practical, well buttressed with facts and illustrations, interestingly written, though in a somewhat involved style, the product of a well filled mind and of the life experience of a mature Christian leader.